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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE OF THE LATE REV. RICHARD ASTLEY.

ONLY a few brief months ago we were called upon to record in our Obituary, the departure from amongst us of two greatly esteemed ministers, WILLIAM TURNER, Jun., and JOHN GOOCH ROBBERDS. To their names, as ministers who have finished their course, we have now to add that of RICHARD ASTLEY, the companion of their early studies and their friend and frequent associate through life. He died at his house at Stourbridge, in Worcestershire, on Monday, the 19th of March, having just entered upon his 70th year. He was born on March the 12th, 1785, at Chesterfield, in Derbyshire.

Mr. Astley must not be allowed to pass to the grave without some public notice being taken of the principal events in his life, and some public testimony being borne to his most excellent and exemplary character. In the earlier days of Protestant Dissent, these testimonies to the ministers, as one by one they passed away from this scene of things, were usually borne in sermons delivered at the time of the interment or on the succeeding Sunday. These discourses, partly practical partly biographical, were often printed, and they now form, when collected, a large and very valuable body of biographical matter of the most authentic kind, and are amongst the most important evidences we possess for the general history of the Nonconforming Protestants of England. The pages of a Miscellany such as ours appear to be a more convenient medium through which the friends of departed worth among our ministers can communicate with the present times and with futurity. Striking facts or extraordinary positions are not to be looked for in such biographical notices. The situation of a Dissenting minister who confines himself very much to the duties of his profession, is quite opposed to everything that partakes of enterprize or adventure; nor does it usually make manifest any marked peculiarities of character. The virtues of the minister are of the gentler, the quiet, the unobtrusive kind, those which make little show in the world, but which command the respect of all who know how to estimate human character justly, and make them eminent blessings to all who, by the ties of nature or the accidental arrangements of society, are brought more especially within their influence.

Mr. Astley approached perhaps as nearly as any one whom this age has known, to the good old Presbyterian minister of the preceding age; intent above all things on comforting the afflicted, instructing the ignorant, guiding men's steps into that way which leadeth unto life, and urging them to continue walking therein more by the love than by the fear of God. He looked upon Religion, as his fathers in the ministry had done before him, as a sentiment infused, a perpetual stimulant to the formation of the character which we have reason humbly to hope may recommend us to the favour of God; and on the offices of Religion, as divinely appointed means to make the sentiment of Religion efficacious. He looked upon it as the paramount duty of the Christian minister to render men as far as possible useful members of the community, and acceptable in the sight of Him that judgeth in the earth. Everything was to tend to this, and to centre in this: and, again like his fathers in the ministry, he had no greater joy than to see those who chose him as their spiritual guide and Christian pastor adorning the profession which they made by their useful, honourable, devout and Christian-like lives.

The Presbyterian ministers of the last century laid down a principle of very wide application, and of which perhaps they did not perceive the full effect,—that it was to the state of the affections and the habits, and to the conduct which was the exponent of that state, that attention would be paid at the Great Day, and not to what church a man belonged, what creed he professed, what opinions he held, or what outward ordinances they were to which he had been subjected. A most favourite text with them was, that "God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him;" and they attributed the healthy state of morals in the Presbyterian congregations (and surely a more respectable body of persons never adorned the Christian name) to the keeping perpetually in sight men's duties and their hopes, as opposed to matters of question and disputation. But they did not so understand their great principle, as to forget that there is an honour and a reverence due unto Truth, and that it was a part of their duty to endeavour to know the truth, especially by the study of the writings of the apostles and evangelists. Changes of opinion had gone on in the minds of the long-lived among them, so that they had become loosened from what are called orthodox doctrines; and long before the actual close of the century, the great majority of them had abandoned the doctrine of the Trinity, and their notions of the mediatorial character of the Saviour, and of the atonement made by his death, had become so attenuated as scarcely to have any existence, and at the beginning of the present century might be said to have disappeared from amongst them in any form.

It was thus that our late friend received his Christianity, and formed his public instructions upon it; and though he lived in a time when very bold opinions are promulgated among the Presbyterian ministry, some in one direction and some in another, it is probable that no material change in this respect took place in him. In one short phrase, his conviction of the divine, that is the supernatural, origin of the Christian dispensation never wavered. The simple Unity of the Deity, the human nature of Jesus Christ, accompanied with some peculiar and inexplicable union of his with the Divine Mind, or, in other words, that he acted uniformly under Divine influences of a kind different from those to which we all are subject, a confidence in the eternal mercies of God our Heavenly Father, and the hope of a resurrection to eternal life;—in these he remained constant to the last, and to the last he felt their benign influence over himself.

The elder Presbyterian ministers, looking more to the *agenda* than to the *credenda*, and thinking perhaps that what drew the attention of the common people to matters of faith, was apt to draw them off too much from what is the main business of life, did not adopt popular means to make more known what was peculiar in their creed. They were not averse from defending their opinions before proper audiences, but they did not make them the subject of their pulpit discourses, nor did they form associations for the express purpose of drawing attention upon them. Change in this respect, however, came. As what are called Evangelical sentiments were more assiduously promulgated than they had been, it appeared necessary to meet them by a more open promulgation of Unitarian sentiments; and, naturally averse as he was from disputings and controversies, he took his part in the efforts which were made, unsuccessfully as the event has shewn, to rouse in the common mind a just appreciation of the value of Unitarian views of Christianity. In the West-Riding of Yorkshire, where he was then residing, he was the chief promoter of the establishment of a Unitarian Tract Society, of which for many years he was the active and zealous Secretary. He was as much identified with the Unitarian body at large, as he was with the Presbyterian section of it, and he shrunk from no obloquy attending that profession. But it was with the Presbyterian section of it that he was more particularly identified. There his friendships were formed; there his affections rested; and he sought little society but that which he could find amongst them. Yet he had the courteous manners and gentlemanly tone of mind which would have qualified him to appear to advantage in any society, and he had an amount of knowledge on a variety of subjects, and a fund of good sense, which made him a most agreeable and instructive companion. Add to this, while we speak of him rather as a man than as a minister, that there was in him the most kindly and obliging disposition. No one could

shew more zeal and alacrity when anything was to be done to serve a friend. He loved his friends, and they returned his affection.

The warmth of attachment to the religious body with which he was identified, was no doubt a sentiment the result of some observation of their claim to it. But we cannot but recognize its origin in his birth in a family who had been Presbyterian Nonconformists from the beginning of Dissent, and not a few of them ministers. Persons so descended have been and are the main support of what are called liberal opinions both in politics and theology. The hereditary spirit was carefully fostered by parental culture. A more beautiful and perfect specimen of what the pastors of the Presbyterian congregations were in the latter half of the last century, can hardly be found than in the father of Mr. Astley, who died in 1817, when far advanced in years. The writer of these lines well remembers his venerable appearance, his dignified deportment, his professional bearing. We knew him by sight to be a minister, and he was respected and looked up to by those who saw him without knowing him; and he had the praise of all that knew him for his guileless simplicity and his affectionate disposition. His name stands first in the list of ministers who were educated in the Warrington Academy. He was the minister at Congleton and Preston before he settled at Chesterfield, where he laboured for forty years. There is an account of him, prepared by his son, in the *Monthly Repository*, Vol. XIII. pp. 81 and 155. The father of Mr. Astley, of Chesterfield, was also a minister, the principal scene of his labours being Whitehaven, in Cumberland, where he died in 1756. And if we ascend still higher, we shall find that Mr. Astley's ancestors and relations on the father's side, the Chorleys and Lelands of Lancashire, were persons who thought it their duty to refuse to identify themselves with the English Protestant Church, and who gave of their sons to the Nonconforming ministry some who were of its strength and ornament. Mr. Astley had a very remarkable painting of the Chorley family at Preston, of the time of the Commonwealth, the work of some unknown but able artist. On his mother's side it was the same. She, who had much to do in the formation of his mind, was the daughter of Mr. Joseph Wilkinson, for some time one of the ministers at Birmingham, and afterwards one of the most eminent merchants of that town. He was one of four sons of Mr. Isaac Wilkinson, who died minister of the congregation at Warley, in the parish of Halifax, in 1722, being then only in his 37th year. His death was much deplored, partly on the public account, partly on account of the large family he had left. But they were cared for. Three of them settled at Chesterfield, then a town of more importance than it now is. They prospered there; and they and their children were among the chief supporters of the congregation, and among the most influential families in the place.

There was thus a strong *birth-stream* of opinion determining the mind of Mr. Astley to the principles and practices in religion to which he adhered with such unwavering resolution; and when he connected himself in marriage, it was with a daughter of another family who sprung from ministers who left the Church at the time of the Act of Uniformity. This family affords another instance of the perpetuity of the principles through a long series of generations traced to the Presbyterian ministers; for who rather than the Heywoods have been steady and liberal supporters of Nonconformity, and on a wider field of the great general principle of civil and religious liberty? As to Mrs. Astley's particular descent, she was the daughter of Mr. Samuel Heywood, of Nottingham, a great friend of both Mr. Gilbert Wakefield and Mr. George Walker, names intimately connected with Nonconformity. He was the son of Mr. Eliezer Heywood, for many years the pastor of the Mansfield Presbyterians, son of an older minister of the same name, son of Oliver Heywood, the Northowram minister, whose name is so prominent in the history of Yorkshire Nonconformity, by his wife, the daughter of John Angier, of Denton, "holy and peaceable Mr. Angier," one of the latest survivors of those who had been the Puritan ministers of Lancashire in the time of Puritan ascendancy.

Mr. Astley received his grammar learning under his father; and when he had determined to devote himself to the Christian ministry, he was sent to the Academy in which his father had received his education, not then at Warrington, but at York, whither it had been removed that it might have the benefit of the superintendence and instruction of Mr. Wellbeloved, then the minister at York, and not willing to remove. It was in the fourth year of its York life, and it was then beginning to acquire reputation as a place for training youths to the office of pastor in the Presbyterian congregations. Nothing was wanting in Mr. Wellbeloved in the qualities requisite for those who undertake an office, the duties of which few persons have been found capable of discharging well. It had also excellent Visitors, first in Mr. Wood, of Leeds, and afterwards in Mr. Turner, of Newcastle, and in Mr. George Wm. Wood, a judicious administrator of its temporal affairs. The plan also of instruction was good; and the general influences favourable to the establishment of the minds of youth in those principles on which in after life they were expected to frame their conduct. It was a day of doubtful rejoicing for the old Dissent when the York system was broken to pieces, and other means were tried of creating ministers for the congregations.

Mr. Astley joined the classes in September, 1806. There entered at the same time Mr. Turner, Jun., and, in the year before, Mr. Robberds, the two recently deceased ministers. Contemporary with him were Mr. J. W. Simpson, Mr. Sydney Shore,

Mr. James Darbishire, Mr. Eyre Lee, all now dead. Mr. Hunter, Mr. Madge, Mr. Dean and Mr. James Yates, were also his contemporaries. He was a diligent student, passed through his studies with reputation, and at the conclusion of them, in June, 1810, he was declared by the body of ministers assembled for the purpose of examining into the state of the Academy, and the fitness of the young men who were going out into the world as ministers, to be with others qualified and recognized ministers in the body to which they belonged. The Divine blessing was also evoked on them by the President or Moderator of the assembly. Into this form the old practice of Presbyterian ordination had by that time degenerated. There was no laying on of hands, no delivery of certificate;* but there were still examination in philosophy and divinity, probationary sermons, charges on the office and duty of ministers, and declaration of fitness for the office. All these remained of the older and more perfect services. But the disuse of the laying on of hands can be looked upon favourably only by those who are disposed to account all Christian observances but as so many acts of superstition, and who would deprive ministers of all protection, even at the loss of having them bound more strongly to a certain course of life, from which there are but too many inducements, both from things within and things without, to turn them away.

The ministers who left the Academy at the same time with Mr. Astley, were Mr. Smethurst, Mr. Robberds and Mr. Yates.

On leaving the Academy, Mr. Astley was for a short time the pastor of the Presbyterian congregation at Rochdale; but a scene of greater usefulness soon opened before him, and in January, 1812, he accepted an invitation to become the pastor of the old Dissenters of Halifax, and there he continued to reside till the summer of 1826. This was perhaps the happiest and most useful

* I annex a copy of the testimonial given to Mr. Astley's great-grandfather, Mr. Wilkinson, when he was set apart to the Christian ministry:

"Whereas Mr. Isaac Wilkinson hath addressed himself to us, ministers of the Gospel in the county of York and near it, whose names are subscribed, desiring to be ordained a presbyter, and he having given sufficient testimonial of his diligence and proficiency in his studies and unblameableness of life and conversation, and all exercises duly performed, These may testify to all whom it may concern, that upon Wednesday, the 6th day of September, 1710, we have proceeded solemnly to set him apart to the office of a presbyter and work of the ministry of the Gospel, by laying on of hands with fasting and prayer, by virtue whereof we do declare him to be a lawful and sufficiently authorized minister of Jesus Christ to exercise his ministry in any place where Divine Providence shall call him, and particularly in Warley for the present, exhorting the people in the name of Jesus Christ willingly to receive and encourage him in the execution of his said office, that he may be able to give up such account to Christ of their obedience to his ministry in the Lord as may be to his joy and their everlasting comfort. In witness whereof, we have hereunto put our hands the day and year above said."

The signatures which follow, in column, are Jonathan Wright, Nath. Priestly, Tho. Dickenson, Jos. Dawson, Jere. Bairstowe, Wm. Benson, Eli Dawson, Wm. Pendlebury.

period of his ministerial life; for he had a large and cultivated congregation, in which were several persons in whom were united considerable attainments with great personal worth, among whom may be especially noted Dr. Thomson, a physician, a man of great information, and distinguished by his zealous efforts in promoting the extension of Unitarian views of Christianity. He had also great opportunities of doing good among the poorer class of the inhabitants of that populous town. He founded the chapel library; he extended the schools; nor did he wholly neglect the state of some of the decayed village chapels of the old Dissent in that wide parish,—most of them, however, though springing up under the influence of the old Presbyterian ministry, having before his time passed into the hands of the new Dissenting communities, which in that district now so completely overshadow the old Dissent.

They had chiefly owed their origin to the zealous labours of Mrs. Astley's ancestor, Oliver Heywood, who had been removed from the Coley chapel by the operation of the Act of Uniformity. His name had come down on the stream of tradition; but it occurred to Mr. and Mrs. Astley while here, that he ought not to remain without some conspicuous memorial of his character and services to religion. He had been buried in the parish church of Halifax; but whatever memorial there may have been of him, it had long since disappeared. No place appeared more suitable to receive such a memorial, than the chapel at Halifax which had been opened by a service conducted by Mr. Heywood. The design was not executed immediately; but some years after Mr. Astley had left Halifax, he placed in the chapel a very handsome brass plate, with an inscription setting forth the great features of Mr. Heywood's history and character, headed by the words, which so well express what was the governing principle of his life, *Væ mihi, si non prædicavero!** This was not all which he did in honour of this truly apostolic man; for having a large collection of writings of Mr. Heywood, including portions of his

* We annex a copy of this inscription :

“*Væ mihi si non prædicavero.*”

OLIVERUS HEYWOOD

Lancastrensis, Academiae Cantabrigiensis alumnus, in ordinem V.D.M. per Impositionem manuum Presbyterii, more primitivo cooptatus, A.D. MDCLII. Ineunte ætate accepit eum hæc parochia, ubi in capellatu Coleyensi pastoris officium summa fidelitate exercuit: donec cum fratribus suis disciplinae Presbyterianæ, beneficio ejectus est xxiv^o die mensis Augusti, A.D. MDCLXII. Post nefastum illum diem, durante vita indesinenter evangelium per omnem Halifaxiam prædicavit, præcipue inter Coleyenses. Multa patiens, inconcussus vixit; divinis promissis innixus, in pace decessit A.D. MDCCII. In templo vicino exuviæ deponuntur.

In domo hac, ubi vox frequenter est audita, ANNA ASTLEY, neptis nepotis ejus cum RICARDO ASTLEY conjuge suo, nunc tandem haud sine Numine huc reversa, hoc monumentum posuit.

Nomen quoque inscripsit ANNÆ HEYWOOD, matris carissimæ, quæ obiit A.D. MDCCCXXV. et intra hos muros placide est composita.

diaries, he placed them in the hands of Mr. Hunter, who was thus enabled to give an account, so exact, minute and authentic, of the life and labours of this great father of Yorkshire Nonconformity.

It was some surprise to his friends when, in the summer of 1826, Mr. Astley left a place where he was so respected, useful and happy, and removed to a distant part of the kingdom, where, if he found nothing better, there was a somewhat milder air and a more genial climate than he found among the Yorkshire hills. The place was the city of Gloucester. Here he found a most respectable, but a disturbed congregation, not the less disposed on that account to attach themselves to him, because he came a messenger of peace. A better choice they could not have made, for he was remarkably of a conciliatory disposition, and the congregation soon assumed under him that amicable tone which for a time had departed from them. It was no difficult task which Mr. Astley had to perform, for the materials before him were good; and for the years that he was pastor here, he had the care of an harmonious and united congregation, by whom he was beloved and respected, and amongst whom he did all the good which his office gave him the opportunity to perform.

While at Gloucester, he published a *Selection of Five Hundred Hymns for Public and Private Worship*.

In the summer of 1831, he again removed. The place to which he transferred his residence was Shrewsbury, where he was unanimously invited to be the minister of the old Presbyterian congregation which had originated with the Ejected Ministers, and which, notwithstanding the great defection that had taken place when Unitarian views were openly acknowledged by a large part of the congregation, was still one of the most flourishing in those parts of the kingdom, and enjoyed the benefit of a pure Unitarian endowment, the gift of Mr. Tayleur. Mr. Astley has given in the pages of this *Miscellany* an excellent account of this society. He was here, as in all other places at which he had been settled, greatly esteemed and beloved. But his health was beginning to fail. Sometimes he was physically unable to perform his public duties, yet he made himself useful to his people by the advice he gave them, and through the means of the schools to which he and his family attended. His influence was felt among the general population of the place, so that his death, even though he had for some time ceased to reside among them, caused a general expression of regret and concern. His funeral, for he was laid near his sister in the grave-ground of St. Chad's at Shrewsbury, was attended with some rather unusual expressions of regard. The clergyman of that parish closed his windows for the whole of the day. Thus it will ever be with the prudent, the virtuous and the just,—those whose minds are formed on the apostolic platform, “first pure, then peaceable,

gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."

In 1853, he came reluctantly to the conclusion that there was no probability of his recovering such a state of health that he could discharge the duties of his ministry with satisfaction to himself or others. His sight was becoming dim, his hearing dull, his power of moving almost exhausted; so that he determined to place his resignation of his office in the hands of the trustees, and retired from Shrewsbury and from public life.

In fact, all his work was nearly done. When he left Shrewsbury, the world was before him, and he selected for his dwelling-place the pleasant little town of Stourbridge, where lived a part of the family of his former Tutor at York, with whom he had long been acquainted, and between whom there had sprung up a strong mutual esteem. He took the house which was built for the residence of the minister, and in this house he breathed his last, after a few weeks of rapid decay of his faculties. In seasons trying to the affection of those who so carefully watched over him, he had none but pleasant thoughts, faint unconnected visions, but all indicative that there was peace within. So that he died as the wise would wish to die, and the good usually do die, reposing a wearied spirit on the bosom of his Father, and looking for his mercy to eternal life.

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST.

WE will not define what that sacrifice was, we will not philosophize upon it, for the more we philosophize, the less we understand. We are well content to take it as the highest exhibition and the noblest specimen of the law of our humanity—that great law, that there is no true blessedness without suffering, that every blessing we have comes through others' suffering. The very life we enjoy, the condition on which we enjoy it, is that it is the result of maternal agony. Our very bread is only obtained after the toil and anguish of suffering thousands. There is not one atom of the knowledge we now possess which has not, in some century of the world or other, been wrung out of Nature's secrets by the sweat of the brow or the sweat of the heart. The very peace which we are enjoying at the present day, how has that been purchased? By the blood of heroes whose bodies are now lying mouldering in the trenches of one hundred battle-fields. This is the law of our humanity; the Redeemer became subject to it:—the law of self-surrender, without which reconciliation is impossible.—*Rev. F. W. Robertson.*

[A note taken by a hearer of a sermon, February, 1851.]

ESSAY ON ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE AS ADAPTED TO THE UNITARIAN CHURCH.

BY MR. HENRY A. DARBISHIRE.

“Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord, or what is the place of my rest?” Acts vii. 48, 49.

WERE the subject of our present inquiry less worthy our candid and earnest consideration, some apology for the following remarks might have been necessary; but when we reflect that its importance is asserted, without the aid of accessories which give lustre to themes of inferior interest, we trust our observations will be received as a proof that we do not disregard the present opportunity of bringing the state of our places of worship and their services under critical and impartial review, and that we are desirous of lending all the aid in our power to those whose zeal, influence or position, may urge them to attempt the difficult task of rousing the spirit of lethargy which appears to entrance our energies.

For the generality of our readers, the opinions which we entertain will possess none of the charms of novelty to recommend them, as they do not differ from those which prevail among the most liberal and unsectarian professors of Unitarian Christianity; but there may be some who will glance over the following pages, whose attention to the subject of external observances in connection with the belief which they profess to cherish and support, has never yet been excited, and whose interest in the devotional exercises of their worship has never yet been roused. To these, as well as to the liberal members of other churches, would we especially address ourselves; for we conceive that the ignorance of the one is not more injurious to the interests of our faith, than the indolence of the other, and that until both are aware how little we differ on all the essential points of religion from the rest of the Christian world, but little progress in the extension of charity and kindly feeling can be relied upon. The more we proclaim our religious views with calm and unostentatious dignity, and the more our places of worship and services accord with their liberality and simplicity, the more shall we discover friends and supporters among the good of all denominations. We cannot but admit that hitherto we have appeared to rest too easily satisfied with the reward which the zealous labours of our forefathers enabled them to bequeath to us, and that we have not turned its attendant benefits to their fullest account. Instead of bounding from the withdrawn hand of oppression, and rousing our energies for new and more glorious exertion, we have remained comparatively passive and insensible to the freedom at our disposal; we have suffered the stealthy steps of indolence to

advance upon us unheedingly, and to perpetuate a thralldom more humiliating, as it is more voluntary, than that from which we were emancipated. This is evident in the unwillingness to cast aside our inherited vestments of Puritanism, and to make the necessary effort to conciliate those who differ from us. We are too watchful for a due recognition of our own dignity, and yet manifest an undisguised contempt for the opinions of others whom we may consider less intellectual than ourselves,—too plainly indicating that the independence whose fancied possession we so loudly boast of enjoying, has a very precarious, if not a very doubtful existence. Our churches, and the monotonous services which we celebrate within them, claim our first attention, for they are the exponents of the character of a religion, by them proclaimed to the world, and by their means interpreted and revealed. Men who pause not to inquire deeply, draw their inferences from externals; and were they to judge of Unitarian Christianity by the churches in which it is preached, their opinion of the belief and its professors would be equally unfavourable to both. Still we could not blame them. We are just neither to ourselves nor to the doctrines which we most highly value. We do not let our “light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.” Our churches still retain the character which was stamped upon them by our Puritan forefathers, while the ideas and intelligence of their descendants have become modified and enlarged. We are willing to acknowledge that we ought not to remain idle observers of the tide of human progress rushing past us to the great ocean of eternity, without launching some barks of our own, whose freighted good shall profit us hereafter; and yet we make but little effort to do that which, after all, is only our duty, and still refuse to “enter into other men’s labours,” though we would reap the reward of their exertions. We regard with pleasure the improvement which the past few years have effected in the design and arrangement of the churches that have arisen under the auspices of those of our educated clergy who have given to ecclesiastical architecture so much of their study and attention, and yet we do nothing to regenerate our own barn-like erections.

The contrast which these inevitably suggest, even to the most indifferent observer, cannot fail to rouse a feeling of regret, if not of disdain, at our want of devotional reverence. While in the one we find a lofty nave and aisles, transepts, chantries and porches, with their tessellated pavements,—solid timber or stone roofs studded with golden stars,—mullioned windows glowing with all the radiance of stained glass,—richly carved screens, seats, pulpit, font, and other appropriate ecclesiastical furniture; in the other we have a forest of pews, a black stove which has deprived the universal whitewash of its primitive purity, and a

pulpit, contained within four bare walls, boasting the regularity of a parallelogram, and possessing a number of rectangular perforations dignified by the names of doors and windows. This nakedness is occasionally made more apparent by the addition of a *compo* screen of pilasters of the sixth order of architecture, whatever that may be, and a false pediment appended to that side of the edifice intended to be recognized as the principal front. These we are solemnly requested to receive as æsthetic embellishments, and desired to respect them accordingly. Such is the character of the majority of the temples in which we worship. There are exceptions, most worthy exceptions; but they are by no means frequent, and are rarely to be found out of the large manufacturing towns of our northern counties. Let us inquire whether our homes partake of the same meanness and desolation. Do we scruple to lavish upon them all the luxuries, elegances and refinements which wealth, taste and a high state of civilization can command? Nay, do we not consider it due to our own importance so to do? How, then, can we refute the charge of inconsistency if we continue to persevere in our indifference?—if we deny to the temples which we consecrate to the service of the Great Giver of all things, all participation in the progress by which we ourselves have benefited? Had the world been stagnant, society dormant, education and liberty inactive in their work of social amelioration, ever since the first melancholy, barn-like edifices called chapels rose above the earth to disfigure its beauty, some excuse might be urged in palliation of our supineness; or had we Unitarian Christians the same dangers to encounter, the same difficulties to overcome, or the same oppressions to resist, at this present day, which roused the energies of our Puritan forefathers two hundred years ago, we might be justified in still maintaining their barriers for our protection, and in wearing their armour for our defence. But the obligations which now devolve upon us are of a far different character.

“Tempora mutantur et nos mutamur in illis.”

The changes of two centuries have not been recorded upon the pages of the world's history in vain. Church abuses, like so many others which bade bold defiance to the extension of religious freedom and toleration, and against which our zealous forefathers combated so vigorously, have either become mitigated or entirely swept away. Principles of freedom have taken root, and fears of oppression and tyranny have been dissipated. What good cause, then, have we to shew for not laying down our weapons, and proclaiming the victory which a long and painful conflict has secured, by throwing off the restraints that are alike offensive to others and irksome to ourselves? Puritan doctrines, manners, habits and prejudices, might serve to repel when defence was necessary, but they certainly will not prove attractive so soon as their services cease to be required. The fetters of the

dungeon may deprive the captive of his liberty, but they can never be available as an ornament when he is free.

Man inherited freedom at his birth, and with it warm and generous impulses, interests and affections, none of which were bestowed upon him by his Great Creator that they might be stifled and subdued, but that they might be regulated and controlled so as to increase his happiness. In all ages and in all countries, these have found expression in the worship of the Great Supreme. The universal recognition of an Almighty Guardian, and the anxiety to render him allegiance, are the undeniable indications of one of the first laws of our being. Through all vicissitudes, "man, unchanging man," has desired to render his homage as perfect and complete as he had the power, and to bestow upon it all the solemnity which he felt was due to the Object of his adoration, "from whom, and through whom, and unto whom, are all things." Various as their climes, are the expressions by which men have characterized this homage. We see it in the offering up of sacrifices, ceremonial pageants, and the chantings of hymns of praise and thanksgiving, but more remarkably developed in costly and beautiful architecture. Temples have been reared with every accessory that could assist to adorn and enrich them; not mere piles of stone and wood and gilded ornament, but edifices suited to the prevailing form of worship, and admirably adapted to its wants and requirements, bearing throughout the impress of purpose, the unequivocal expression of fitness and design,—characteristics, indelibly stamped upon all the religious buildings of our forefathers even from the time of Moses, to which we attach much importance as deserving of particular attention during our present inquiry. Their character being influenced by the successive changes which modified men's conceptions of the Divine attributes, varied with them and served to illustrate them. A cursory glance at the history of the past will prove our assertion, and perhaps explain why they possess an interest independent from their associations, which we seek for in vain among our modern piles of unmeaning masonry.

The earliest temple on record is that erected by Moses in the wilderness, though we are told that a tent was set apart for the purposes of worship, beyond the polluted precincts of the camp, before the commencement of the great tabernacle. The sagacious Lawgiver soon perceived the necessity of establishing a regular devotional service, as the best means of weaning men's minds from their idolatry; and knowing that, in this early stage, their feelings must be acted upon more through the agency of the senses than the intellect, he proclaimed that a nobler temple than they had hitherto possessed should be dedicated to the omnipotent Jehovah, and that the richest materials and most elaborate workmanship should alone contribute to its construction. These tidings were received with great gladness by the

multitude, and soon all were engaged in perfecting the undertaking. The most precious and scarcest metals, jewels, fine and richly embroidered stuffs, linen and valuable skins, spices, oil and incense, were collected for its use. Pillars of brass with silver capitals adorned the interior; curtains of fine linen, of various dyes, hung suspended from silver hooks and rods before the front entrance; the sacerdotal vestments were of the richest description, "holy garments for glory and for beauty;" and all connected with the work aided, in a greater or less degree, to increase its beauty and enrichment. The building was not large, its dimensions being only fifty-two feet by seventeen and a half: these appear inconsiderable when compared with those of our present cathedrals; but as their climate enabled the people to perform their devotions in the open air, and as the tabernacle itself was more exclusively devoted to the use of the Levites during the exercise of their duties, its arrangement was adapted to their requirements rather than to the accommodation of the multitude. To have erected a building capable of containing thousands of worshipers would have been almost impossible, and therefore the services were of such a nature that a large concourse of people might participate in them without experiencing inconvenience or loss by being far removed from the officiating priest.

This is the account which we have received of the first preparations for the ceremonials of the Jews, and the first formal recognition by the people of Israel of the worship of the Great Jehovah as their God and sole Object of adoration. It shews an earnest endeavour to omit nothing that might serve to create and strengthen a religious feeling in the hearts of the worshipping multitude. All the means at their command were unsparingly bestowed, and it was not until the lapse of years that these external observances, united with other causes, aided in the destruction of that purity in the early Jewish worship, which was so rigorously guarded by penal statutes in the days of Moses.

Costly and magnificent as the tabernacle may have been, for Solomon was reserved the glory of erecting its successor, which, under the name of "the Temple of the Lord," surpassed in splendour anything that had been achieved before. It is not our intention to increase the number of unsatisfactory speculations on minute details, which the ichnographic arrangement of the Temple of Solomon has so frequently occasioned: a general description is all that we require for our present purpose. The first object to be secured being an imposing situation, the site selected for the great work was Moriah, or "the Mount of Vision," the highest ground in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, whose real elevation was apparently increased by its sides being faced with a wall of stone, built up perpendicularly from the valley. The ground plan and general disposition were almost

identical with those of the original tabernacle, and consisted of a propylæon or porch, a temple or holy place, and a sanctuary or holy of holies. There were also courts for the Gentiles, Israelites and priests, with porticos and cloisters; and over the latter were chambers for various sacred purposes. The distribution and perfect suitability of the whole to the ceremonial form of worship, which was now on a much more extended and magnificent scale,—the costliness of the materials and workmanship, and the treasure contained within its walls,—rendered this Temple the wonder of surrounding nations; and to these, rather than to its magnitude or architectural beauty, it owes its eternal fame. The description which we have received of its gorgeous magnificence, when dedicated by Solomon to the service of Jehovah, is hardly surpassed by the following lines of our great poet:

“The Temple shakes, the sounding gates unfold;
Wide vaults appear, and roofs of fretted gold.
Raised on a thousand pillars, wreath’d around
With laurel foliage, and with eagles crown’d.
Of bright transparent beryl were the walls,
The friezes gold, and gold the capitals.”

The courts, cloisters and porticos which we have enumerated, were all included under the general name of “the Temple,” and covered an extensive area; but the main building, like the tabernacle, was not large. Its length was only one hundred and five feet, and its height but fifty-two and a half. As in the days of Moses, the religious services were solemnized, to a great extent, in the open air; the holy of holies still remained a mystery to all but the high-priest, who entered it but once a year; the holy place, or body of the temple, only admitted the officiating priests; and the public or national rites were celebrated in the courts, where the processions, offerings and sacrifices were held. Here stood also the great tank for ablution, and the high altar for burnt-offerings. Each part had its uses and fulfilled the purposes for which it was designed. Apart from the cedar-lined walls, the gilded roofs, the richly-dyed and costly draperies, the candlesticks, chains, basins and lavers of pure gold, which contributed to its splendour, the building deserved admiration for itself, inasmuch as it proclaimed the worship and belief of those who reared it. Theirs was the worship of the invisible, immortal and incomprehensible Jehovah, the Creator of the universe, the only wise, perfect and true God, the Father Almighty. His name, His attributes, were glorious; and glorious as man could render them were to be the expressions of His homage and adoration. This spirit, so visible and so incapable of misinterpretation, we would once more see revived; its manifestation different, but in itself the same. Processions, sacrifices and ablutions, we need not now; they are inconsistent with the progress which religion has made since the time of Solomon; but we do need

zeal and earnestness—we do need an increased regard for the honour due to our God, the same great Being whom our Jewish forefathers worshiped, but more fully and more gloriously revealed. It cannot be for us who recognize Him as the God of Love, to be more backward in our gratitude and praise than those who adored Him as the God of armies and of power.

With the destruction and rebuilding of the Temple we have nothing to do; in all its leading characteristics it remained unchanged for ages. Shortly before the Christian era, we hear of another building devoted to religious purposes, but not entirely confined to them. This was the synagogue. Although it has been maintained that there were synagogues in the time of David, and though the fourth and fifth books of Moses and the seventy-fourth Psalm have been cited to prove that they were as ancient as the ceremonial Law, no assemblies appear to have received the name before the coming of Christ. As the exposition of the Law entered into its services, the arrangement of the synagogue differed from that of the temple, but its enrichments and embellishments still marked its dedication to the worship of the Supreme Being. The most famous was that at Alexandria, which, we are told, was of such splendour that the rabbins declared “that they who had not seen it, had not seen the glory of Israel.” We cannot learn that any peculiarity characterized the exterior of these places of worship. The interior appears to have consisted of a large open area, unobstructed by columns, and to have been furnished with a pulpit, a desk for the reader or expounder of the Law, seats or pews of various degrees of honour, and a balcony or gallery provided for the women, who sat apart by themselves. Lamps were either attached to the walls or suspended from the ceiling. Synagogues were not confined merely to the large towns and cities, but were built in villages and in the country, generally on the banks of streams or rivers, so that a ready and constant supply of water for purification was easily accessible. That they were numerous cannot be doubted, for in Jerusalem alone we hear of nearly five hundred. This increase in the number of religious buildings, the attention to interior accommodation they display, and the adaptation of the services to congregational worship, all indicate a gradual modification in men’s views, which was to prepare them for that great change so soon to be effected in their thoughts, feelings and conceptions towards their Creator.

With the light of Christianity disappeared the mists which had shrouded their ideas of His highest attributes. The God of Power, propitiated by sacrifices and bodily chastisement, was henceforth to be recognized and worshiped only as the God of Love, to whom a lowly, penitent and obedient heart is the most acceptable offering. A more spiritual conception of the Deity was to be created. Religion and morals were to be united; and

the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was to generate a purer and more exalted ideal of the loving attributes of the Supreme, than any which had yet been revealed. As these influences extended, the physical agency of the Almighty receded from the view, and His spiritual character became more fully acknowledged and understood. The followers of the new faith abandoned their burnt-offerings and sacrifices, and devoted themselves solely to the services of praise and adoration. Cruel and systematic persecutions prevented them from giving to their devotions any of the outward ceremonial which had marked those of their fathers. Cemeteries, groves and other retired places, "witnessed the fervour of their prayer," and screened from observation the celebration of their simple rites. It is difficult to assert, with any degree of certainty, the constitution of the earlier Christian church; but we learn that "after the first century its communities appear to have been ruled by elders or bishops, with one superior to the rest, and to have organized their worship rather in accordance with that of the original synagogue, with this great difference, however, that in the services of the Christians civil affairs were entirely excluded." From A.D. 116 to 161, during the reigns of Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, the adherents to the despised faith were tolerated, though not allowed to erect temples of their own. But under Alexander Severus, the relations of Christianity to society became changed. Christian bishops were received at court, and their spiritual character recognized,—the Emperor himself allotting a piece of ground in Rome for the erection of a place of worship. What the earliest Christian churches were like, we have no positive knowledge to determine, as on the accession of Diocletian they were demolished, and their congregations scattered; still, from later examples, we may conclude that they were uniform, compact and regular. Under Constantine, Christianity increased in favour and in power.

The basilica, or that portion of the royal palace wherein justice was administered to the people, was found to be well suited to the requirements of worship, and was given up to religious exercises. It afterwards served as the model for all primitive Christian churches, which adopted and retained its name long after the judiciary tribunal had ceased to exist. Constantine erected six out of the seven principal basilicæ in Rome, viz. Sta. Croce in Gierusalenum, S. Giovanni Laterano, S. Lorenzo fuori le mura, S. Paolo, S. Pietro, and S. Sebastiano. Vitruvius describes these buildings as "spacious halls, built for the administration of justice, and for merchants to assemble in during the winter." He adds, "that they were surrounded within by porticos, two ranges in height, in the upper of which persons might walk unseen by those below." They have been further described as "large chambers of an oblong form, with a flat exterior wall

capable of being easily pierced for windows without injuring the symmetry of the architecture. The hall was divided by two rows of columns, leaving a central avenue with two side aisles, and these longitudinal avenues were crossed by one in a transverse direction, which was elevated a few steps. At the further end, opposite to the central avenue, the building swelled into a semi-circular recess or apse, with a rounded ceiling, within which stood the altar, and, separated from the nave by cancelli or bars, afforded the derivation of our modern term 'chancel.' This arrangement coincided with remarkable propriety with the distribution of a Christian congregation." We have given this account in detail, because the basilicæ were the first important temples in which the Christians worshiped, and because their form became almost universally adopted in the earlier centuries of the Christian era. Bingham asserts that there were "some few early Christian churches of an octagonal form, and there were others in that of the cross."*

As the power and patronage of the church increased, the religious buildings became more costly and elaborate in their decorations. The Church of the Resurrection, afterwards called "the Church of the Holy Sepulchre," rose with a splendour only comparable to that of the Temple of Solomon. Eusebius describes it as "standing in a large open court, with porticos on each side, and with the usual porch, nave and choir. The nave was inlaid with precious marbles, and the roof, overlaid with gold, showered down a flood of light over the whole building; the roofs of the aisles were likewise overlaid with gold. At the farther end arose a dome, supported by twelve pillars, in commemoration of the twelve apostles; the capitals of these were silver vases. Within the church was another court, at the extremity of which stood the chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, lavishly adorned with gold and precious stones, as it were to perpetuate the angelic glory which streamed forth on the day of the resurrection." After this period, Christianity, with more or less success, extended its influence. Its professors were no longer looked upon as a separate people, with manners and peculiarities at variance with the rest of society. Their religion, regarded with far other feelings than those of aversion and contempt, became that of the civilized world. With increased influence and power, the services of the church became more complex, and the buildings more varied in plan and character. These consisted of a combination of many separate parts with one grand whole, each part being necessary for the service or requirements of the wealthy priestly order, which now became a requisite appendage. The cathedrals which rose in solemn majesty during the four centuries which succeeded the

* The original MS. was accompanied by a plan of the basilica at Fanum, erected by Vitruvius.

Conquest, will ever remain enduring monuments of the zeal and piety of our ancestors.

"They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build."

Nothing that the world had hitherto seen could compare with these Christian temples, in vastness and beauty of proportion or variety and delicacy of detail. They were the "petrifications of our religion." Their plan was almost invariably the same in its leading features, the Latin cross being the general outline. A nave with side aisles, one or two transepts, choir and chancel, characterize them all, and these, with the exception perhaps of the transepts, are found in the innumerable smaller churches which were scattered over the land at the same period. The three great divisions which had been recognized as necessary, since the time of Moses, were universally maintained; the porch, the nave and the chancel, each respectively corresponding with the propylæon, the temple and the sanctuary of the original tabernacle.

Contemporary with the perfection of ecclesiastical architecture, existed the highest degree of splendour and magnificence that was ever bestowed upon church ceremonial. The processions and high festivals of our mediæval ancestors, were the most gorgeous that the imagination could conceive. All the appliances of solemn and stately music, choirs of innumerable voices, the perfumes of incense, paintings, sculpture and stained glass, were added to increase their effect. By degrees, however, these gained the ascendancy; congregational worship fell into disuse among the wealthier communities; abuses crept in unheeded; the purity of those principles which had been inculcated by the earlier adherents to the religion of Christ, and which had hitherto been, to a great extent at least, maintained by their descendants, became relaxed, and the true spirit of Christianity was threatened with total destruction.

But in the year 1554, a sect stood boldly forward to avert this impending evil, which, from attempting to establish a purer form of worship, received the name of Puritan. Its adherents would acknowledge only the laws of Christ as their guide, and by these laws the prevailing spirit of the church was tried and condemned. They asserted that mystic and significant ceremonies were unlawful, and they refused to admit that rites and habits might be determined by any one. They insisted, moreover, that those things which Christ had left indifferent, ought not to be made necessary by human laws, and that the ceremonials of the church which had been abused to idolatry, and had a manifest tendency to popery and superstition, were to be rejected. In mere matters of detail, they objected to the use of the surplice and other clerical vestments during divine service, alleging that neither the prophets of the Old, nor the apostles of the New Testament, had

worn any distinctive garments. In the third year of Mary's reign, they laid aside the English Liturgy, and, breaking off from the public churches, began to assemble, as they had opportunity, in private houses or elsewhere, to worship according to the dictates of their conscience. Like other Reformers, they refused to tolerate moderate measures, and passed at once from one extreme to the other. They dreaded lest the abuses which they had condemned should enter unawares into their new forms of worship, and avoided all approach to similarity in the services they shunned and those they were anxious to establish. No effort to mark their distinction was spared; their devotions consequently became cold, rigid and austere, without life and without interest. Severe, unyielding formality was stamped most visibly on their demeanour, their habits, and even their dress; we cannot therefore feel surprise at seeing their places of worship share the same repulsive character. These were little better than barns, either in external appearance or in interior accommodation. Four plain whitewashed walls were all that they had to acknowledge as the temple of their God. Paintings and other decorations were excluded; music was regarded as an abomination; and all that could interest their feelings or affections were condemned as delusive temptations of the Power of Darkness, and rejected with fear and distrust.

Having now traced the leading changes in religious worship, and marked their influence upon the buildings devoted to sacred purposes, we bring our notice to a close, trusting that our review, incomplete though it be, has sufficiently proved our assertion,—that sacred buildings, and the services celebrated within them, are the exponents of the character of a religion, and that it is by their aid proclaimed and interpreted. From the days of Moses to those of the austere Puritans, change has been marked by a corresponding individuality; and devotional exercises and the temples reared for their observance, altered together. Though we cannot deny that some of the gall of the early Puritans still lingers in the blood of their descendants, some warmth and vitality remains; and it were vain to plead this inheritance as an excuse for sanctioning their austerities by listless indifference, when they are so much at variance with our present extended and liberal views. If we continue to retain them, even in a modified form, our motives will be ascribed to supineness and indolence; we may be justly accused of shewing a culpable disregard to the demands which our religious and social position requires from us; and therefore, to avoid this censure, it is very desirable that their influence be restricted as soon as possible.

To refuse to follow in the ruts of antiquated ancestry,—to explore fresh paths, and range over wider fields of inquiry and research,—are the ambitions which now interest men's endeavours; and this desire of freedom from the fetters of prejudice

and bigotry, which time has rusted and change rendered valueless, should alone urge us to advance consistently with the age in which we live;—an age of energetic and practical thought, of earnestness and excitement,—“an age,” as Dr. Channing remarks, “in which we learn from experience what might have been inferred from the purposes of our Creator, that refinement and civilization are not, as has been sometimes thought, inconsistent with sensibility, and that the intellect may grow without overshadowing the heart.” In the same discourse from which we quote, he adds, “The human mind was never more in earnest than at the present moment; it is impossible not to discern this increased fervour of mind in every department of life. A new spirit of improvement is abroad; the reverence for antiquity and age-hallowed establishments, and the passion for change and amelioration, are now arrayed against each other in open hostility;” and he concludes his remarks by declaring that “Religion ought to be dispensed in accommodation to this spirit and character of our age; that it must be seen not only to correspond and to be adapted to the intellect, but to furnish nutriment and appeals to the highest and profoundest sentiments of our nature; that men will even prefer fanaticism which is in earnest, to a pretended rationality which leaves untouched all the great springs of the soul, which never lays its quickening hand on our love and veneration, our awe and fear, our hope and joy.”

No period could be more favourable than the present for proving that we are far from being desirous of being the sole loiterers in the march of enlightened progress, the effects of whose advance have been so rapid and so striking; of declaring that we have the interests of our faith warmly and seriously at heart, and that we are anxious to conform to the changes which time has effected and increased civilization rendered necessary; of openly avowing our willingness to extend the right hand of friendship and to promote the sacred objects of charity and friendly intercourse with all the steadfastness and perseverance which we can summon to our aid.

But mere generous impulse and good intention will be alike disregarded and despised, if they effect nothing,—if they be not the well-springs of vigorous action,—if theory yield not to reality and dogmas to invention. Priding ourselves on the practical character of our religion, let us no longer be subject to the reflection that, in these days of railroads, telegraphs and palaces of glass, we alone remain passive observers of other men's progress, folding our hands and doing nothing; that we alone “pull down our barns and build greater,” with the belief that men will call them churches; and continue in our delusion that we are rendering becoming homage to the Almighty by suffering His services to remain mere cold, lifeless, hebdomadal observances,

without warmth, without zeal, without even the appearance of reverence in their favour.

The reflections of Dr. Channing on Christianity are equally applicable to Unitarianism. "Let it not be said," he observes, "that it has an intrinsic glory, a native beauty, which no art or talent of man can heighten; that it is one and the same, by whatever lips it is communicated; and that it needs nothing but the most naked exposition of its truths to accomplish its serving purposes. Who does not know that all truth takes a hue and form from the soul through which it passes, that in every mind it is invested with peculiar associations, and that consequently the same truth is quite a different thing when exhibited by men of different habits of thought and feeling? Who does not know that the sublimest doctrines lose, in some hands, all their grandeur, and the loveliest all their attractiveness?"

If we honestly recognize the spirit of our belief, if we feel its influence permeating our whole being, and if we truly and faithfully follow its dictates, we cannot fail to give it expression; we must proclaim it abroad, for it will not, it cannot be hid. Acknowledging this, must we not also acknowledge the necessity of bestowing upon its publicity all the distinction which its high character deserves,—of sending it forth among men as an honoured belief, and one to whom all honour is due?

As the temples of our forefathers have been shewn to be the exponents of their belief, we shall proceed to indicate how the churches which we may hereafter have occasion to rear should assert the glory of ours. The sanctuary of the tabernacle, the holy of holies of Solomon's Temple, the cancellum of the basilica, are not our requisites. Burnt-offerings, sacrifices and ablutions, with their high altars, cisterns and lavers, enter not into our services. Regarding ceremonial processions as unnecessary, their paraphernalia of embroidered vestments, enshrined relics, and jewelled vessels of gold and silver, would be sought for in vain among our ecclesiastical furniture. Our requirements are less varied. A large open space, not unnecessarily obstructed by piers, but well distributed for the purposes of social worship; sufficient accommodation for an organ, full choir, and a few hundred children; a vestry for the officiating clergymen; a muniment closet or room in which the papers, books and valuables of the church are deposited, and in which, on the occasions of marriage, the necessary signatures may take place; galleries for children too young to participate in the choral service; and a large elevated dais, enclosed by railing, to be used during the administration of the sacrament or the solemnization of the rites of marriage;—these are our requirements; and an altar with chairs and cushions upon the dais, a handsome sacramental service of gold plate, a reading desk, carved open benches, and a

stone font, are our ecclesiastical furniture. If any of these be found wanting, our building will be incomplete.*

The style of architecture which we would adopt is the Gothic, particularly those divisions of it known as the First Pointed or Early English, and the Second Pointed or Decorated styles, the first prevailing from the close of Henry the Second's reign to the commencement of that of Edward the First, or from 1189 to 1272; the second, during the reigns of the three first Edwards, or from 1272 to 1377. We select these, not only on account of their greater purity, but because they offer a variety which the others do not possess. They may find equally beautiful expression in the churches of the poorest, as in those of the wealthiest community; in their least, as in their greatest and noblest development. For the former, the Early English style is the most suitable. Its characteristic is simplicity; its arches are lofty and beautifully proportioned; its mouldings simple in their arrangement and detail; and its prevailing ornament pure and free from minute elaboration. Early English churches may be perfectly plain and free from enrichment, and yet lose none of their architectural beauty or effect. For our large buildings, and where ampler means are at our disposal, the early or geometrical Decorated style should be adopted. Though possessing less richness and elegance than its immediate successor, the flamboyant Decorated, its general character is regarded by some as both purer and bolder. Its arches are less pointed and more varied than those of the last style. Its tracery consists of the most harmonious combinations of geometric forms, principally trefoils, quatrefoils and cinquefoils, arranged within circles in endless variety. Its mouldings are rich and full of contrast, and its characteristic ornaments simple and unobtrusive; while the introduction of croquets gives it an air of finish and completeness denied to its predecessor. The flamboyant Decorated, which succeeds, cannot be regarded as a distinct style; it is merely a less severe and more poetical rendering of the same. Its tracery, abandoning its geometric character, adopted the flame-like wavings which gave it the name "flamboyant;" and its ornamental detail became enriched with a profusion of triangular canopies, with their croquets and finials, which greatly increased its beauty and delicacy. Its leading features, however, remained unchanged, and as it has been universally admitted to exhibit the highest perfection of Gothic art, we have adopted it as the most appropriate style for our ideal church.*

Though we trust that our plan may be sufficiently explicit, we will give a general description of its distribution before entering into the more minute details of its furniture. A lofty porch,

* The original MS. was accompanied by drawings which elucidated our views more in detail.

embracing the three principal entrances, leads to the main division of the building, which consists of a nave and two side aisles, separated by slight piers which support the simple groining of the roof, indicated by the dotted lines. These longitudinal divisions are intersected at their apsidal termination by a transept of the same width as the nave; at the south end of which is a vestry, with its accompanying requisites, and a staircase leading to a gallery above, appropriated to the accommodation of the younger portion of the Sunday scholars. A muniment room, with similar staircase and gallery, is situated at the opposite end of the transept, and the raised dais upon which the altar stands occupies its central area. The apse or eastern extremity of the church is separated from the transept by a screen or reredos, and is exclusively set apart for the use of the organist and a choir of two hundred children. The positions of the pulpit, reading-desk and font, may be varied at pleasure, though we regard those marked upon our sketch as the most suitable.

It will be remarked that our perspective view shews no indication of the usual tower and spire, beauties regarded as almost essential to our Established Churches. They are omitted, not because they are closely associated with other forms of worship, but because, in the present instance, their introduction would interfere with the arrangements of our plan. We consider that any combinations of form which can add beauty to our buildings and are consistent with their style of architecture, should be introduced, whether they be borrowed from our neighbours or not. This selection, however, should be made with judgment; for the beauty of any composition, when critically analyzed, will be found to consist, not in the mere assemblage of several beautiful parts, but in their judicious distribution with reference to the whole. Harmonies and contrasts should occur side by side, that each may derive value from the other. In all religious edifices, the latter should predominate on the exterior, the former in the interior arrangement. While the variety of gable, pinnacle and buttress, delights the eye externally, the mind should be tranquillized by the harmonious repose which reigns within. None of the grotesque sculptures of the exterior should be found among the internal enrichments. Angels and figures of ideal loveliness, mingling with foliage and other graceful forms, should aid in inspiring a lofty and devotional feeling. Prophets and apostles should be the subjects of decoration for the windows, all of which ought to be filled with stained glass, as a calm and subdued light adds to the solemnity of a building dedicated to the services of religion. The groining of the roof should be decorated with a design of a wavy and indefinite outline, executed in delicate positive colours, sufficiently distinct to render it harmonious with the rest of the interior, but not prominently attractive. The floors should be inlaid with tessellated pavement, and the enclo-

sure round the altar covered with crimson cloth. The screens, pulpit and reading-desk, should be of oak, panelled and enriched with carving. The centre compartment of the reredos may appropriately contain a picture of our Lord delivering his great Sermon on the Mount,—the exposition of that doctrine, so “pure, holy and of good report,” on which we build our faith. The benches or seats should also be of oak, and furnished with book-boards and fald-stools: they should be sufficiently low to avoid, as far as possible, all temptation to the indulgence which the luxurious and exclusive pews of our Puritanic edifices so freely and acceptably offer. They should be open, unenclosed by doors; which arrangement, while not interfering with the possession of seats, would remove the appearance of exclusiveness which now too often deters members of other denominations from joining in our services. The organ should be placed against the reredos, and arranged so as to form an elevated and ornamental centre to that portion of the screen immediately above the altar; the screen should partake of the same character as the rest of the wood-work, and consist of traceried pedimental canopies of richly-carved oak, bristling with finials and croquets; the pipes should be enriched with a drapering of gold and rich colour, so that nothing capable of increasing the beauty of the whole work might be omitted. The font should be of stone, carved and panelled, and may be enriched with the sculptured angel, lion, bull and eagle, of the evangelists. An arcade should surround the aisles underneath the windows, for the insertion of inscriptions to the memory of the virtuous dead, so that their names and examples might be commemorated without subjecting the architecture of the building to the disfiguring and often objectionable monuments which the ignorance and bad taste of statuaries remorselessly produce. The introduction of symbols should be avoided; those peculiar to the evangelists, partaking more of the character of emblems, and as such generally recognized, may, however, be received as an exception; but their total exclusion were better than their general adoption. Although many of the pagan symbols were present in the churches of the early Christians, having received an interpretation consistent with the new faith, and though they became more frequent and numerous as Christianity extended, their introduction was not without its utility. Their meaning was never ambiguous to those for whom and by whom they were introduced; they served the purposes of books, and recalled to mind events and characters in religious history which might otherwise have been forgotten. But this is not the case now. The effect of their introduction would rather tend to mislead and mystify, than to suggest and elucidate; and therefore, as our belief is especially founded upon all that we conceive to be true, we should shun every appearance of disguise and deception as inimical to the interests of truth.

In whatever degree the costliness and decoration of our churches may vary, according to their locality and the pecuniary means to be distributed, we would maintain the general arrangement here laid down. Its leading features may be increased or diminished in proportion to the area to be disposed of, but they should never yield to minor accessories. The details which we have described may be considered unnecessarily elaborate, and beyond the reach of any but our wealthiest and most prosperous communities; but we have entered thus minutely into their description, rather to indicate what a costly edifice should possess, than to indicate its completion may be perfect for the honour due to the Almighty, than to urge their absolute necessity. Still we would avoid all deception; and though our materials were of the humblest, they should be the best of their respective kinds. If a roof of stone groining were too expensive a luxury, we would have an open one of timber; should oak exceed our means, red fir, stained of a dark and sombre hue, should be substituted; should chromatic decoration be regarded as impracticable in every case where it could increase effect, the roof at least, if it be of timber, might supply an azure field for a powdering of golden stars; lest necessity compel us to forego the beauty of mouldings and panelling for our seats and screens, the plain and double chamfer, with all their varieties, should not be forgotten; and where foliage and croquets are forbidden, graceful proportions and inexpensive forms should prove our invention and attest our desire that, were our powers less restricted, our liberality would be greater. True beauty rests upon fitness and design for its charms; neither costly materials nor elaborate workmanship can compensate for their absence; and though, when we have it in our power to bestow dignity and splendour upon the temples which we erect to the honour and service of the exalted Being whom we worship, we should withhold nothing,—yet we can never feel at a loss for some expression of our earnestness and sincerity, when the means at our command are limited or confined. Mouldings may be elaborate or plain; traceries, intricate or simple; colouring, uniform or full of variety; carvings and enrichments, numerous or reserved for prominent situations only: still they are all accessories, adding to the expression and character of a work, though independent of its inherent value.

Were we called upon to state what existing church we consider as the most perfect in its interior distribution and effect, and the best adapted to serve as a model for a building devoted to congregational worship, we should unhesitatingly name the Temple Church in London. It is too well known to require elaborate description here, but we cannot withhold the expression of admiration which it excites whenever we join in its services.

The coup d'œil on entering the fine Norman porch is very striking. The circular propylæon, which is the most venerable

portion of the structure, and which contains the effigies of the reposing Templars,—the lofty arches of the nave,—the lancet windows of the eastern end, filled with richly-stained glass,—the harmonious colouring of the roof, and the air of serenity and repose which pervades the whole,—cannot fail to affect the most indifferent mind with their welcome influence. The slender elegant piers of Purbeck marble from which the groining of the roof springs, offer no obstruction to the view of the pulpit or altar; and the proportions and form of the roof itself render every word that is uttered at either of these points distinctly audible. We should be glad, indeed, to see this type of building more generally adopted.

Having thus traced the architectural character of our churches, we conclude our remarks with a cursory glance at the form of worship which we would see solemnized within them, and which we regard as most consonant with the spirit of our belief.

Hitherto our public services have been confined to a regular weekly service, a sacramental service, used when the Lord's Supper is administered, and the Marriage and Funeral services,—the latter of which will no longer be solemnized within our places of worship. To these, we would add another. The Baptismal service is even more universally recognized than that of the Sacrament, and yet our churches possess no accommodation for those who desire its public celebration. There are many who, for various reasons, refuse to partake of the holy Sacrament, who would shrink with dismay at the idea of depriving their children of the rites of Baptism. Here is another inconsistency in our present system which requires removal. The font ought to become as much a part of ecclesiastical furniture as the altar or the pulpit. It should be prepared on the first day of the week for the use of those who wish to avail themselves of the public service; and when it is desirable that this should be performed at the close of the morning or evening devotions, it may be situated at the eastern end of the nave, between the pulpit and the reading-desk; though its position near the western entrance is more convenient when the ceremony is performed in the middle of the service, as the parents of the child are more at liberty, and better able to avoid occasioning disturbance to the congregation. The position marked upon the plan* is that usually adopted in the Established Churches, but there it bears a signification which we fail to recognize. To us, therefore, this is of secondary importance, and may be varied to suit the requirements of the clergyman or the habits of the locality.

In several of our places of worship, the celebration of the Lord's Supper is characterized by the same absence of solemnity which marks the rest of the service. Sometimes we find the holy ves-

* At the western end of the nave.

sels arranged in a pew near the pulpit, where none of the communicants can see them; at others, they are displayed upon a shabby table, covered with a white cloth, and exposed in the aisle. That these objectionable arrangements may no longer continue to offend the feelings of reverence which the solemnity of the service inspires in churches where propriety and decorum are more faithfully observed, a stone altar, suitably adorned with purple cloth, should be provided, upon which the sacred vessels should rest on those occasions when the Sacrament is administered. It should be raised by steps above the enclosed dais, and be supplied with cushions and the books required during the service. A chair on each side should be provided for the officiating clergymen.

Though marriages are now celebrated within our churches, but little provision has been made for those who attend their celebration. On reference to our plan, it will be seen that we have left a considerable open space in front of the dais, and that we have arranged the seats at each end of the transept, to suit the convenience of those who are immediately interested in the services celebrated at the altar. The broad lower step of the dais should be cushioned, and the dais itself appropriated to the use of the clergyman. Its propinquity to the vestry and muniment room, in which the necessary signatures take place, will render this arrangement more convenient than that which we usually meet with at present.

We shall now proceed to review the character of our general services, those which we have just noticed being extraneous, as occurring only at irregular intervals.

On many accounts we think the Liturgical preferable to any other form of regular service. With a slight modification, the prayers of the Church of England may be easily adapted to our own worship. Besides being extremely beautiful, they are almost universally known, and by their general introduction into our churches, they would tend to create a feeling in the congregation that each individual was a participator in what was going forward,—a very desirable object to be attained, as under the present system the clergyman alone, except in a few instances, appears to be interested in the service. Another reason for advocating the use of the Liturgy is, that its adoption would materially assist in breaking down the useless barriers which prevent members of other sects from entering our churches and joining in our devotions. Men are so much the creatures of habit, that they do not like to pray in a manner to which they are unaccustomed; and the more closely all forms of prayer assimilate, the more will the feeling of fraternity be increased. In the spirit of Unitarianism, “this is a consummation devoutly to be wished.” Universal charity and brotherhood, peace and good-will towards all men, are the doctrines of Christ, and it is their attendant

blessings which we would see established among us, whose possession we would most earnestly and most zealously strive after.

Music, from the earliest times recognized as an important element in all devotional exercises, should on no account be omitted. It does more to elevate and refine the feelings, and appeals more directly to the heart, than any portion of the service not claiming its assistance. We would have it consist chiefly of chants, of which we have so many fine examples, and which, being simple and impressive, are easily retained by the least educated ear. Part singing, and the introduction of difficult pieces requiring professional performers for their proper execution, should be avoided, as at variance with the spirit of congregational worship, which, to be really efficient, requires the co-operation of the whole assembly. The elder portion of the Sunday scholars should be placed under the eye of the organist, and the elements of choral singing combined with their regular instruction: the more advanced should act as preceptors and leaders of the rest.

We would have sermons partake more of the character of expositions of the Scriptures, and practical applications of them to the duties of daily life, than of doctrinal discussions, which seldom, if ever, have any beneficial effect or lead to any satisfactory result. We deem it better to teach men how to read and think for themselves, than to make them reliant on the reading and thoughts of others; better to shew them their own failings, than to indicate the imperfections of those who differ from them.

If the spirit of Unitarianism is to continue to gather strength until it bloom in full maturity, those who undertake to cherish it must cease to recognize the petty distinctions of sects and creeds; they must suffer the names Presbyterian, Trinitarian, Baptist and the rest, to share the oblivion which has shrouded the distinguishing brands of the political world; and they must impress upon all connected with their faith, a nobleness, truthfulness and liberality, which shall render it acceptable to all who hold these attributes to be estimable and valuable.

Being assured that the religion of Christ was for all men and for all ages, and believing that the faith which we profess is more consonant with its spirit than any other, let us strain every nerve to render it the means of advancing and extending the precepts and example of our Lord, that by so doing we may prove ourselves worthy the name of his disciples.

MR. SHARPE'S NOTES ON THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.*

MR. SHARPE has a well-established reputation in Biblical and Egyptian studies. The readers of the *Christian Reformer* will find in this volume (as announced in its Preface) many papers which have already appeared in our pages. The notes on the Prophets, for instance, we recognize; but the larger part of the contents of the present volume are new. The Preface also reveals Mr. Sharpe as the writer of a recent critique in our pages on a work of similar scope but very different materials; its language being almost identical with the opening of that critique, where the writer defines the different departments of a complete Commentary on the Bible (see C. R., 1854, p. 77). The department undertaken in this volume is, "to explain the history of the books by means of the history of the nation. Such is the aim (he says) of the present work; and by so confining it, the author avoids the difficult subjects of the inspiration, miracles, prophecies of a Messiah, and the authority now due to the Mosaic Law since the introduction of Christianity." (Pref. p. i.)

Subjects quite as difficult as these which are professedly avoided, are indeed handled, and decided in a somewhat absolute tone, in the present pages; and some of these decisions virtually imply the settlement of some of the difficult subjects above excepted. With great learning and acuteness, Mr. Sharpe brings also to his task a peremptoriness of decision which seems too impatient of critical doubt, and too intent upon realizing a distinct opinion on many questions which cannot, in the nature of the case, admit of absolute decision. Thus, he insists upon ascertaining, in reference to all the books of the Bible, even the most ancient, the actual steps of their original composition, and the subsequent alterations and additions which they have undergone. In his own words (p. 3):

"Most of the books consist of an older portion with later additions; and we must never suppose the whole of a work modern because some part of it is so. We must separate every book into the several portions, and study each by itself, and assign to each its own date, by the help of the historic circumstances therein mentioned, and of the state of the nation as therein described."

Now we must except against this very general statement, that "most of the books of the Bible consist of an older portion with later additions." Certain books, as the Psalms and Proverbs, are, in their very nature, collections, and bear plain marks, and avowals also, of having been collected at different times. Others, as the Prophets, profess to be respectively the utterances of one person, though perhaps at various times of his life. Genesis is

* Historic Notes on the Books of the Old and New Testament. By Samuel Sharpe. Moxon. 1854.

plainly composite, referring to the world's earliest facts and preserving probably its earliest literature, while coming down to historical times. And the historical books of the Jews are, like histories in all nations, the works of authors who, in their own time, write contemporary history from personal knowledge and oral testimony, while they appeal of course to previous documents for the facts of previous times. But the assertion that most of these books consist of an older part with later additions, seems very arbitrary and vague. As applied to the books of the New Testament, it is still less justifiable. Those books belong to the classical age of the world's literature; and their criticism, based on the identical principles which are applied to the text of Tacitus and Horace, of Diodorus, Strabo and Josephus, has brought out the integrity of the books in the clearest light imaginable, proving them to be less chargeable with corruptions or additions than any of the classical writers, just in proportion as they were held in more general esteem, more widely diffused and more frequently copied. Criticism has pointed out so few additions, proved or even suspected from internal evidence, as to make the reverse statement true in their instance: *Few of these books contain any later addition; they are practically as their authors left them.* Perhaps, indeed, Mr. Sharpe's observation was intended to apply chiefly to the Old Testament (which is the immediate subject of the section), though the paragraph speaks expressly of the New Testament manuscripts also.

But in the case of those books, whether of the Old Testament or the New, in which we have reason to suspect later additions to the original document, there is still a serious practical question to be asked, namely, whether modern criticism *can* "separate every book into the several portions," as Mr. Sharpe says we *must*. Can we, must we, do we, deal thus with Homer, Herodotus, Virgil, Cæsar, Tacitus and the rest? Do we assume that most of these works consist of an older portion with modern additions? Where we even suspect, as in some instances we do, that something of this kind has happened, do we venture actually to separate them into the supposed several portions, and say, Homer wrote this, but the verses next preceding are older than his time, and the verses following are two, three or five hundred years later?

Conjectural criticism is useful, avowedly *as* conjectural criticism; but whenever it ventures to adopt the decisive tone of historical fact, it virtually weakens, instead of strengthening, the grounds of real knowledge. Mr. Sharpe, we venture to think, has given to conjectures sometimes plausible, often at best very doubtful, the style and title of literary and historical facts. And as, in this book of very moderate dimensions, they are unaccompanied for the most part by even an outline of the reasons on which the conjecture is in each case founded, the result is to lead

the unlearned reader to take as actual facts what are at the best clever conjectures; while to those who know the nature of conjectural criticism upon the Bible, the effect is that of surprise how any mind can convince itself so distinctly and positively of things so doubtful and fanciful.

But we must cite instances of this over-distinctness and certainty of critical result.

Of the Pentateuch, Mr. S. says (p. 5):

The books "are of various ages, the greater part *certainly* more modern than Moses, who has been usually called the writer; and part, perhaps, more ancient." * * * "Most of this Law (the Jewish Law) *has been added* at various times to the history of the march, in the form of speeches or commands spoken either by the Lord or by Moses to the people. The two longest of these inserted portions form two of the books of the Pentateuch, namely, Leviticus and Deuteronomy."

Possibly, indeed, this may have been the case (though we believe very differently); but who can say it really *was* so?

Of Genesis, Mr. Sharpe says (p. 6), without giving any reason to justify the opinion:

"The larger part, in its present form, seems to have been written when the people dwelt in Canaan and were ruled over by judges, when Ephraim and Manasseh were the chief among the tribes."

Again (p. 13):

"Jacob's opinion of his sons in chap. xlix. was written in the time of Samuel, before the levites became holy, and when the tribe of Benjamin was in front of every battle. And if part of the praise of Judah seems too great for that age, before Judah was the royal tribe, we must suppose those words a later addition."

Of Exodus, he writes (p. 14):

"We have no difficulty in seeing that it was written at very different times; and it is only by separating the modern portions, which have been added one after the other, that we can prove the great antiquity of the original writing."

Mr. Sharpe finds the figure, "Is the Lord's hand shortened?" in Numbers, to be borrowed from Isaiah. Why not by Isaiah from Numbers?

Ruth (he says) "was written in the reign of David, or not long after at any rate, before her being a Moabitess was made a reproach, as it was in the book of Deuteronomy."

Ecclesiastes "would seem to have been written some time after the return from the Babylonian captivity, and after the division had arisen between the sect of the Sadducees and the sect of the Pharisees; as the belief in a future state is denied in a manner which shews that disputes about that opinion had already begun." But surely there were anxious questionings of futurity long before the sects of Pharisees and Sadducees arose.

An instance or two shall be added from the New Testament

of the decisiveness with which our author draws critical conclusions from premises of a most doubtful kind. He makes James's Epistle to have been written in allusion to Paul's doctrine of Justification by Faith in his to the Romans, and makes Paul reply to James in the letter to the Galatians!

"As the words of Paul may have led some to undervalue moral works, so the words of James may have led others to place trust in ceremonial works. This may have been the case with some Jews of Galatia, in Asia Minor; and accordingly Paul soon afterwards, in his Epistle to the Galatians, returns again to the case of Abraham's faith, and not without some sharpness against Peter and James."—P. 235.

Startling while some of these suggestions are to those who can see no incongruity between Paul's doctrine of Faith and James's, is not all this *too clever* to be sound? On what a string of improbabilities does the critical conclusion hang! That James (probably in Judea) should have read Paul's letter written from Corinth to Rome; that he should have written a letter "to the twelve tribes" in contradiction of it; and that Paul should have replied to this in a letter to the Galatian Christians! The *sharpness* of the latter is intelligible as against the men who (we know as historical fact) came down from Judea and taught, saying, "Except ye be circumcised, ye cannot be saved." But how gratuitous the supposition of an indirect controversy between the two apostles!

In his notes on the Colossians, Mr. S. hints that the false teachers against whom Paul warns them were Apollos and Barnabas, and reminds us that Paul had quarrelled with Barnabas several years before at Antioch (forgetting that he had since mentioned him very kindly in his first letter to the Corinthians); and from the verse quoted below, he infers that Paul had warned the Colossians against Barnabas, and that Mark, as his cousin, would have been offensive to them unless he had expressly bespoken a kind reception for him: "Aristarchus saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, touching whom ye received commandments, if he come unto you, receive him." Is not this too ingenious by far; and needlessly *uncomfortable* to those who have thought they understood how Paul and Barnabas might separate, yet respect one another still?

Dissenting thus from many of Mr. Sharpe's conclusions, we trust we shall not be understood to disparage his learning and ability. Assuming these qualifications, indeed, as indisputable, we have the less feared to comment on what seems to us an occasionally unscientific application of them to the work of biblical criticism. Would that we had more men among us, both laymen and ministers, thoroughly accomplished like him for biblical inquiries and disposed to the task! But the criticism of the Bible is, we fear, more and more in danger of giving place, in our pulpits and periodicals, to a false and most unphilosophical taste for

settling questions of revealed faith by metaphysical speculation. As the "oppositions of science falsely so called" were the earliest occasion of disguising the plain facts of the gospel history, so now the claims of historical Christianity are perilled by the disposition of speculative and mystical minds (so flattering to the incompetent pretentiousness of others less informed) to settle or supersede all these grave questions of historical fact by an easy appeal to what is called spiritual consciousness. It is as if a judge in court should pretend to decide causes without the production of witnesses, from his own pure consciousness, not only of law, but of facts and persons, and all their sayings and doings. With Mr. Sharpe we may hold amicable controversy as to the bearings of particular evidence; but we are quite agreed as to the properly historical character of the inquiries themselves, and as to the necessity of distinguishing between the inward faculty of judging what is right, and the materials of biblical knowledge presented for its judgment.

THE RESTORATION OF BELIEF.*

AFTER the lapse of more than two years from the time announced for its publication, we have now before us the third and concluding part of this very interesting series of tracts. The first of them was reviewed in our pages in 1852 (pp. 581—591); the second, in 1853 (pp. 48—50); and we shall now proceed to give some account of the third. Perhaps it was not altogether without prejudice that we began the perusal of this concluding number of the series, seeing that the author intends by "the Christian Scheme" in relation to which he considers the Miracles, as that "amply expressed and unexceptive ORTHODOXY" which is set forth in "the several articles of the Nicene Creed" (pp. 317, 318).

In prosecution of this object, the writer endeavours to vindicate for the Miracles of Christ "a place of perpetual efficacy" in relation separately to each of what he considers the three main purposes of his mission; "as Saviour of the world in a secular sense, as Redeemer of his people, and as Conqueror in the world of spirits" (p. 265). In connection with this first purpose, our author justly insists on the necessity of Miracles as the credentials of the authority which Christ assumes to teach and to command. It is an old argument, old as the ministry of Christ himself—nay, old as the beginning of Moses' mission—and valid as it is old; yet neglected by minds prone to choose what is novel in

* The Restoration of Belief: III. The Miracles of the Gospel in their relation to the principal Features of the Christian Scheme. Pp. 241—381. Cambridge --Macmillan. London—George Bell. 1855.

preference to what is true—and needing therefore the earnest repetition and enforcement which it receives at our author's hands. Referring to the teachings of Christ as an ethical Reformer, he remarks,

"His style is this—'I say unto you'—and, 'This is my commandment.' But then the necessary adjunct of an authoritative tone such as this, is—the affording evidence that it has been rightfully assumed."—P. 269.

And farther on he no less justly observes :

"Remove the supernatural from the Gospels, or, in other words, reduce the evangelic histories by aid of some unintelligible hypothesis (German-born) to the level of an inane jumble of credulity, extravagance, and myth-power (whatever this may be), and then Christianity will go to its place, as to any effective value, in relation to humanizing and benevolent influences and enterprizes—a place, say, a few degrees above the level of some passages in Epictetus and M. Aurelius."—P. 290. "The Gospel is a FORCE in the world; it is a force available for the good of man, not because it is Wisdom, but because it is Power."—P. 291.

And then he proceeds to shew that

"It is the presence of this constant force, drawn from a definite religious belief, which makes the difference between the vague philanthropy of the best times of ancient refinement, and the effective benevolence of Christianized modern communities. But the momentum supplied by the Gospel is a force which disappears—which is utterly gone, gone for ever, when Belief in its authority, *as attested by miracles*, is destroyed."—P. 292.

In all this we heartily concur; and greatly do we admire the wise discrimination which our author farther exercises (p. 293) in regarding the fact of the acceptance of the Christian miracles by so many judicious and educated men who reject the idle marvels which cram Church histories, as affording an evidence that "the supernatural element of Christianity is an extant efficient cause, working itself out *now* in the movements of every Christianized community," against which no mere speculative and philosophical objections can have any force. And well does he carry out his view of this *present* practical efficiency of the supernatural element of Christianity; ably does he shew how "the unchanging and the unchangeable certainties of historic evidence" (p. 304) render recurrent revelations unnecessary, and need only to have attention awakened and rivetted upon them in order "to refresh and restore our confidence in the Truth which as a nation we profess" (p. 298). This part of our author's essay abounds with striking illustrations of his argument which have themselves almost the force of independent arguments. Nor less valuable is the view which he gives of his Christian anticipations, in the following interesting passage :

"Yet assuredly I am liable to no such overweening delusion as this

—that I should sit down, with the pages of Isaiah, Daniel, and St. John before me, and should attempt to write the Newspapers ten years in advance! This is a folly which has stood in the way, hitherto, of a warrantable use of the prophetic writings. I am no fortune-teller for Czars and Kings, and have no wish to peruse the palms of the ‘great men and the captains;’ but from the general import, or, as we colloquially say, from the drift and upshot of the prophetic writings—those of the Hebrew Scriptures especially—I gather such things as these.”—P. 307.

And then he proceeds to exhibit some striking characteristics of the golden age, and notes especially among the signs of its coming, as belonging immediately to his present argument, “that working off of the anti-christian and atheistic philosophy which is now in such active progress” (p. 311). How much madness and folly would have been escaped had such principles of interpretation as the writer here adopts more generally prevailed! In all this he has our entire and cordial concurrence.

But here we regret to find that our agreement with this truly thoughtful and eloquent writer is at an end, at least as regards his fundamental positions. When he proceeds to consider the Miracles of Christ as indicative of an original and inherent power in Christ himself as “very God of very God,” disregarding Christ’s repeated and solemn declarations that they were wrought not by himself, but by the Father who dwelt in him,—when he further avows his faith in the prevalent doctrine of “Propitiation”—in the “doctrine of the vicarious sufferings of the Divine Person” (p. 332),—we can only express our astonishment at the assumption of a theory so directly contradicted by Christ’s own words; and this astonishment is the greater when we find our author appealing to the canonical Epistles (but without attempting to verify his appeal) in support of the same; since we cannot help reflecting that the writers of these Epistles appeal to miracles wrought by *themselves* as well as by their Master, without ever suggesting the thought of themselves laying claim to Divinity such as is here claimed for Christ; and speak of themselves and other Christian converts as partakers of Christ’s sufferings in a manner which plainly indicates that their sufferings were essentially such as his had been, yet without the least hint of their being accompanied by any such vicarious or propitiatory efficacy. (See 2 Cor. i. 5, Philipp. iii. 10, 1 Peter iv. 13, compared with Christ’s own words, Matt. xx. 23, and various other places). And so too when, in considering the Miracles in relation to the third intention of Christ’s mission, he avows his entire belief in a personal Satan and his hosts, and interprets the frequent records of demoniacal possession as though the views entertained of the maladies referred to this source were absolutely and scientifically true to the realities which they were thought to explain, we can only wonder that so acute a thinker can be so easily misled; and,

for ourselves, we do not hesitate to prefer confessing the "darkness" in which revelation gives us no light, and renouncing the "superstition" which this writer openly maintains (p. 354). We are far from adopting "the meagre hypothesis" of accommodation which our author justly rejects (p. 352). The problem of the existence of Moral Evil we do not presume entirely to solve. It is certainly not *solved*, but only slightly varied, by the belief in Satan and his rebellion; the actual solution of it being equally difficult, perhaps equally impossible for our finite intelligence, on either hypothesis. Nor do we suppose that the discovery of the proximate causes and remedies of diseases, bodily or mental or both combined, formed any part of the Christian revelation or of the inspired wisdom and words of Christ; whence we conclude that he could not be expected to speak or act otherwise than in accordance with the notions on these subjects which then prevailed among the Jews, and which he held in common with them;—a view of his conduct which not only relieves him from all suspicion of double-dealing, but exhibits him as ever true to the one great and sole purpose of his divine mission, to bring men nigh unto God by revealing to them His paternal character and love and will.

While thus freely expressing our entire dissent from the fundamental principles of our author in these two sections, we desire to do justice to the truly religious spirit which pervades them, and to many striking thoughts, uttered with his wonted eloquence, in which they abound. In his concluding section, headed "The Cycles of Christianity," our author himself seems to us to maintain the distinction which he neglects in those sections on which we have just animadverted; telling us that we shall look in vain in the Gospels "for the solving of distracting problems" (p. 371), such as now perplex us. And in this spirit does he close his truly original, instructive and eloquent volume; a volume, the excellences of which our own firm convictions as Unitarian Christians enable us worthily to appreciate, and for which we would again offer to its sagacious, learned and religious-minded author our most grateful acknowledgments. Would that the sentiment of this concluding passage were practically appreciated by those who seek to be wise "above that which is written"!

"If now the question be put to me, whether my Christian Belief enables me to rid myself of that burden of far-reaching care and trouble which I share with the thoughtful of all ages—my reply is this—In truth I have not found the means of ridding myself of this burden; but in the Gospels I have found HIM in communion with whom I am learning how to bear it; and thus I hope to bear it to the end, still retaining my faith and trust in God as supremely Good and Wise—'a Just God, and a Saviour.'"—P. 381.

NATIONAL EDUCATION.

THERE are now before the House of Commons three independent measures for the promotion of Education in England and Wales (besides a brief Bill to allow poor relief in aid of school charges), and one for Scotland. The latter is brought in by the Lord Advocate in emendation of the Scotch parochial system, and with (apparently) the general favour of the House. Of the former three we propose now to speak, in continuation of the subject as from time to time set before the readers of these pages. Whether any of these Bills will pass, and whether the likeliest would, if passed, be of any real benefit to the cause of education, are grave questions. The first of these was brought in by Lord John Russell and Mr. Hastings on the 8th of February. It is purely permissive to the following effect:

A town council may submit a (self-devised) scheme of education to the Education Committee of Council, two-thirds of the town council being present; and, if approved by Committee of Council, such scheme may be carried into effect. It may be altered with approval of Committee of Council. Expenses (limited to a sixpenny rate) are to be paid by borough fund. The same provision may be adopted by parishes not incorporated, according to conditions prescribed in this Act, and the expenses in such case must be paid out of poor's rate. The Holy Scriptures are to be read in all such schools (but not as a lesson book). Jewish and Catholic children need not be present during the reading; and Dissenting, Catholic and Jewish children are exempt from learning catechism or attending church. Town councils and vestries are respectively to manage such schools, subject to Government inspection.

If this Bill should pass, it may be doubted whether its provisions will be adopted in ten places in the whole country. It is permissive, not imperative; and the principle of *statu quo*, together with the "ignorant impatience of taxation" which characterizes popular bodies in town and country, will probably keep *one-third* of a town council *voluntarily* absent from the vote whenever proposed to be taken. Mr. Baines may defy it.

The second Bill was brought in by Sir J. Pakington, Sir E. Bulwer Lytton and Mr. Adderley, March 16. By its provisions, on due requisition from five or more ratepayers in borough or parochial union, the votes of the constituency will be polled for or against adopting the provisions of the Act. If adopted, a school committee of nine is to be elected by the ratepayers, who will appoint officers and make by-laws, subject to the approval of the Committee of Council on Education. This committee of nine may take existing schools into union or create others, and allow 4*d.* and 5*d.* per head for scholars attending such schools; out of which, five-sixths is to go to the master's salary, and one-sixth

for other school expenses, as much more being added by the Council of Education from the funds voted. The sum thus paid to the master to reckon as private subscriptions now do in entitling him to further increment from the Committee of Council. The rate to be limited to 6*d.* in the £. Evening schools may also be aided. The provisions for meeting the religious difficulty are similar to those of Lord John Russell's Bill.

Of this Bill, as of the first, we doubt whether, if passed into a law, there will be many fruits. It is permissive only; an appeal to the voluntary principle to tax itself and put itself under Government machinery; whereas voluntarism runs quite in another direction at present, be it voluntarism among Church-people or among Dissenters. Amongst other curious enactments for securing religious fairness, this Bill provides that six out of the nine committeemen shall be of the predominant sect in a district, if it can be ascertained what that is, or of the sect which, in any district, provides a school to be put under this Act.

The religious difficulty is, as always thus far, the difficulty. The false principle being still assumed, that religious (meaning *sectarian*) teaching must be introduced into the day-school, these two Bills virtually confess its fallacy by providing exemption for all whom such religious teaching does not suit. This is indeed a great step towards the more generous and comprehensive principle, long ago adopted in the Irish National Schools, of reserving special religious instruction for a particular hour, when attendance is optional, and religious teachers of all orders may attend their respective charges. But even this method is a reflection upon our best day-schools for the upper classes, where no such instruction is usually given (being simply left to the home and the church to communicate); or rather it bespeaks an implied distrust of the same agencies in the families of the poor, and is a sadly expressive sign that our zeal for education is chiefly a sectarian zeal after all.

It is indeed melancholy to notice how increasingly the work of school education is running into sectarian channels, instead of remaining one of the few common grounds of citizenship, morality and essential piety.

A third Education Bill for England and Wales was brought in on the 18th of April by Messrs. Milner Gibson, Cobden and Headlam. It is intitled, "A Bill to establish Free Schools in England and Wales." It provides for day schools, evening schools, infant schools and industrial schools, all perfectly free of charge. Doctrinal religion is not to be taught, but time to be allowed for obtaining religious instruction elsewhere. The day schools are for children of six years and upwards; the infant for those below six; the evening schools for those above ten. The industrial are for such as appear to have no means of support except begging or crime, and are to give food and shelter as well as

instruction,—an order from a magistrate to be the means of admission. School districts are to be formed, and a committee chosen in each to carry out the Act. Existing schools may be converted into free ones. The committee to levy rates (unlimited by the Bill) upon all liable to poor rates; and a Board of Inspection to be appointed, superseding (as we understand) the present Committee of Council on Education.

The constitution of this Board seems rather *Irish*, though not in the sense in which the Irish School system might well have been taken as a precedent. It is to consist, firstly, of a President appointed by the Crown and duly salaried; and then, “such President and Her Majesty’s Principal Secretary of State for the time being, shall constitute and be the Board of Public Instruction.” Very well; how goes on the clause? “And during any vacancy in the said Board” (of *two* persons) “the continuing *members* thereof may act as if no vacancy had occurred.” And it is further provided, that all powers and duties vested in this Board (of *two* persons) “may be exercised and performed by the President for the time being of such Board alone, *or by any two or more* members thereof.” This is amusing, but unaccountably careless. The President of the Board is to be capable of sitting in Parliament (which we suppose he is without this clause, and that he is not qualified to sit by the clause). We confess our surprise at anything so autocratic proceeding from the authors of this Bill, when the constitution of the existing Council of Education has been so often condemned on the same ground.

The conditions for putting the provisions of this Bill into effect differ materially from those of the other two. The others are simply permissive, whenever the constituency of any town or poor-law union chooses. But this allows the “Board” (that is, the President, of his own proper motion) to initiate proceedings everywhere throughout the country, and makes it his business to do so, and the popular will can only act on the defensive, as follows:

The “Board” (or one of his inspectors) having visited any place and obtained proper information, will constitute a school district, seal it with their (*his*) common seal, and advertise it. Then if within three months a majority of ratepayers in the district memorialize the Board against the Act taking effect, it will be put in abeyance for two years after the date of the memorial; and so on, as long as a majority of ratepayers renew their memorial within every two years, it is again put in abeyance. But *the moment they omit to do this*, on the expiration of two years from their last protest, down comes the “Board” with his Act upon them, and they have no help when once caught napping. This Act, at any rate, would not be chargeable with the fault (or virtue) of the other two, of being nugatory. And the power of taxation given is unlimited except by the forbearance of the

local committee elected under its provisions, while the inspectors, secretaries and other officials, are to be paid by Parliamentary money, and (we infer) to supersede the present staff of the Committee of Council on Education.

The great objection which strikes us to this scheme (should it ever be carried) is the abolition of payment, on the part of the parents, for their children's education. In the case even of "industrial" schools, it is right and beneficial to make the negligent parent pay, whenever possible, for the better care taken of his children,—a principle recognized, we believe, in the management of the reformatory schools. In ordinary day schools we should regret to see another blow aimed at the decent pride of the honest poor man, who pays a penny or twopence a-week for his child's education. This pauperizing system would soon ascend step by step to the middle classes, who would find themselves heavily contributing to the school rate (while the former class scarcely would), and be naturally tempted to claim the benefit on behalf of their own children. So their standard of education would decline; or else the better order of schools (not contemplated probably by the framers of this Bill) must throw themselves on the school rate. Is it said, Where would be the harm? the thing is done in Prussia and the United States; there is no disgrace in sending a child to a free school *when we pay a school rate*?—The reply is, that in England we do not do so; we never have thought so; and *the point of honour and independence would therefore be blunted by our learning to do so*.

This third Bill adopts what we have constantly maintained to be the truly religious solution of the very artificial and needless, but ever recurring, religious difficulty; namely, by requiring that doctrinal religion should be reserved (like party politics) for other times and other places more suitable than the day school.

We do not expect any of these three Education Bills to pass, at a time when not even War seems to be carried on in solemn earnest. If lives are trifled away, so may minds and morals. The only functionaries apparently in earnest are the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his myrmidons of the tax offices.

MORAVIAN CHICKS.

THE system, indeed, of taking children from their parents, breaking up domestic society, and sorting human beings, like cabbage-plants, according to their growth, is not more consonant to nature than the Egyptian method of hatching eggs in ovens: a great proportion of the chickens are said to be produced with some deformity, and hens thus hatched bear a less price than those which have been reared in the natural way, because it often happens that they will not sit upon their eggs, the course of instinct having been disturbed.—*Wesley's Life, by Southey*, Vol. I. p. 171.

DISCOURSES BY THE LATE MR. ROBBERDS.*

WE are desirous of publicly recording our sense of obligation to the editors of this instructive and deeply interesting volume of Sermons. Well have they executed the task of selecting from the remains of their departed relative such a series of his discourses as will sustain the reputation earned during a pulpit service of more than forty years. We believe that this volume, while satisfying the high requirements of those whose privilege it once was to listen to the living voice of the gifted preacher, will be valued, independently of all personal considerations, for its healthy and cheerful morality, its true catholicity of spirit, and its warm piety. At the same time, we candidly confess our inability to survey this volume in a critical spirit. At every page it brings before us the good man and eloquent minister, whose recent departure from amongst us we yet mourn. The tones of his rich and sonorous voice still sound in our ears, his dignified person is before our eyes, and once more we realize the kindling earnestness which, as it came from the heart, seldom failed to reach the heart. We have, we believe, heard Mr. Robberds preach more eloquent sermons than any contained in this volume, especially during the latter portion of the first of the three equal periods into which his ministry may be divided. On referring to the dates of the original composition of each of the twenty-five discourses contained in the volume, we find that only three belong to the first period, thirteen to the second, and nine to the last. If the reader miss something, by this principle of selection, of the rich pictorial brilliancy which characterized many of the author's earlier sermons, there is a compensation in the purer taste of the composition, in the simplicity of the style, and still more in the greater earnestness and more practical directness of the preacher's address. It is evident that, after passing a quarter of a century in the work of the ministry, there was a stronger sense of the magnitude of the work to be done and a more earnest desire to do it. There is less play of fancy, but there is greater breadth of view; what we lose in the poetical element, we gain in true Christian wisdom.

The idea which the editors have developed of illustrating in their selection the succession of Christian festivals and natural seasons, is not merely in itself pleasing, but it happily illustrates one of Mr. Robberds's peculiarities as a preacher. No minister more habitually or more skilfully availed himself of occasional topics as the means of arresting attention. But he knew how to improve as well as use the occasion; and he led the thoughts of

* Christian Festivals and Natural Seasons. Discourses suggested by the Principal Epochs of the Christian and of the Natural Year, with others, selected from the Papers of the late Rev. J. G. Robberds. With Memoir, reprinted from the "Christian Reformer" for June, 1854. Pp. 332. London—Whitfield. 1855.

his hearers from passing scenes and temporary topics to matters of enduring and eternal importance.

These sermons are by no means controversial, yet they are, to our mind, in the best sense expository of Unitarian doctrine. They view the great facts of Christianity as historic realities, as representative truths, expressive of most elevating spiritual analogies. They illustrate the beautiful harmony that exists between nature and grace,—between the earth on which man is placed, and the heaven to which he is taught to aspire. They shew none of the painful incongruities and violent accommodations which disfigure the discourses of some who lay claim to pre-eminent spirituality of view. The sense of beauty which the love of nature cherishes, is made by Mr. Robberds to expand into the higher feelings of devotion and confiding and rapturous piety. We have seldom met with more pleasing or affecting illustrations than abound in most of these sermons, of the Fatherly providence of God. We should not desire a better missionary agent than this little volume to dispel prejudices against the character of the Unitarian faith. No person imbued with religious feelings and sympathies could read it without experiencing vibrations to his inward spirit of the author's faith, hope and charity. And yet, while successfully appealing to the sympathies of the Christian world at large, these discourses are essentially Unitarian. They are such as a believer in a complex object of Divine worship, and in a stern Deity needing the propitiation of another's sacrificing love, could not have composed without an entire forgetfulness of his theological system. Mr. Robberds seems not to have aimed at exhausting his subject, but rather at presenting it in a few striking and generally practical lights. The reader who seeks special information may not, on turning to any particular sermon, find the information which he wants; but if his disappointment do not make him impatiently inattentive, he will everywhere find something "to edify, to comfort and to encourage" him.

Looking at this selection of sermons in relation to the title, we find five sermons which may be accepted as expository of the wisdom taught by the successive seasons of nature. The opening of the year is celebrated in a discourse with the title, "Hopes and Wishes suited to a Sabbath Welcome of the New Year." How healthy and practical the morality which was taught in Cross-Street chapel, let the following extract from this sermon shew :

"The sources of human comfort and enjoyment are variously distributed. They are not all crowded together in one enchanted region, so as to make it necessary that they who would be happy should leave their respective scenes of daily occupation, and set out on a distant pilgrimage. Such pilgrims have never found the land of promise.

"In the infancy of geographical knowledge, it was long and fondly imagined that there was a part of the earth, where a perpetual salubrity

and mildness and serenity of climate, together with an inexhaustible productiveness of the soil, without the necessity of labour, secured to the inhabitants a life of constant and perfect enjoyment—without cares, without diseases, without want, without vices, without evil passions. But no progress of discovery ever reached those fortunate islands, as they were called. It was always necessary to suppose their situation more and more remote; till every supposition was proved fallacious, and the advance of knowledge dispelled the whole dream of their existence.

“It is only a like infancy of moral knowledge that dreams of any particular circumstances and duties, connected with the outward condition of man, as necessarily, and without effort or thought on the part of the individual, producing happiness. As the geographer has been obliged successively to strike out from his map of the world the regions which he had assigned for the residence of the happy, and to put in their place countries subject to the same natural laws, and inhabited by the same kind of beings, which were found in the rest of the earth, so has the collector and comparer of moral experience been unable to point out any combination of outward advantages, from which happiness must necessarily be the result. He has been obliged to leave it an undetermined question, where a man may, or where he may not, discover the secret of enjoyment. Or rather, he has left us to conclude that the real secret consists in knowing how to make the best of every situation in which we can be placed, and every event as it occurs. Instead of allowing us to suppose that the fountain of happiness is to be found only in some favoured and almost inaccessible retirement, his observations rather encourage us to believe, that the element which it pours forth to those who are permitted to drink most largely of it, is nowhere very different from that of which almost every man may discover a spring on his own ground, if he will but dig for it.”—Pp. 112—114.

Spring is welcomed in a sermon, full of moral beauty, appropriate to May-day. Thus gracefully do the “Voices of Spring” break on the ear like the sweet warbling of birds:

“We begin to-day, not only a new week, but a new month. And that month, in its general character, we are in the habit of welcoming as one of flowers and blossoms. It belongs more decidedly than its predecessor to the season of spring,—the season of so many bright and cheerful associations, especially in the minds of the young. Anciently, the first day of this month was considered as the boundary line between the confines of winter and summer; and in imitation of the contests which the former often keeps up with the latter beyond this boundary, a sportive warfare was wont to be carried on by youthful companies in the liveries of the respective seasons, always, of course, ending in the victory of summer; which was then, with songs and wavings of green branches, triumphantly brought home.

“Anciently, also, it was a very widely prevalent custom, and one which still longer continued, for companies of the young to go out very early on May-day morning into the fields and woods, and bring back garlands of flowers and branches of trees, with which to adorn the doors and windows of their houses. Nor were the young alone in their welcome to the genial season; for, as one old chronicler prettily tells us, ‘on May-day, in the morning, every man, except impediment, would

walk into the sweet meadows and green woods, there to rejoice their spirits with the beauty and savour of sweet flowers, and with the harmony of birds praising God in their kinde.' Traces of such ancient customs still remain, especially in the rural districts of our land; nor are even our large and busy cities altogether without them. And among the inhabitants of both town and country there will always be those for whom a quiet walk on a fine May-morning, or indeed on any such morning of the pleasant Spring-time, 'into the sweet meadows and green woods,' will have its attractions and also its lessons.

"For, however popular customs and observances may become antiquated and gradually pass away, whatever was healthy and pure, as well as natural, in the feelings which originated them, belongs to all times, and will, in all times, find some adequate expression. The season which our ancestors welcomed in their way, is not received without a welcome by us. It has also to us, as to them, its voices of invitation and promise, its voices that call forth both hope and remembrance, its voices of both admonition and encouragement, its voices in harmony both with exhortations to cheerfulness, and with counsels of wisdom. Let us listen, for a while, on this May-day forenoon, to some among these varied voices of Spring."—Pp. 121—123.

In a kindred spirit did the author pen his beautiful sermon on "Sabbath Walks," in which he vindicates the day of rest from sabbatic rigour, and with equal earnestness strives to protect the Lord's-day from the invasion of frivolity and idle pleasure.

The "Fading Flower" and "November Hints" are the titles of the two other sermons in which our author discourses on the natural seasons. The latter is one of the most ingenious and remarkable sermons in the whole volume. How simply, yet how expressively, did the preacher make the gloom of a November afternoon utter moral lessons of startling force! Take an example:

"We tremble not at the gloom which is now fast gathering around the close of this winter's day. We know it to be no more than seasonable and natural. We think of the comfortable homes to which we are going, and of the light and warmth and cheerful looks which await us by our own firesides. But, my friends, have we any thoughts of equal power to comfort us, when God shall begin to make dark our day of life with the approaching shadow of death? Truly that darkness may be made very deep and terrible. Thoughts of neglected duties, thoughts of unrepented wrongs and unkindness to our fellow-creatures, thoughts of habitual and cherished sins and impurities, thoughts of a mind consciously carnal, unfit for the society of holy beings, and shrinking from the judging eye of a holy God—all these can indeed give a gloomy and wintry aspect to the evening of life."—Pp. 152, 153.

The "Christian Festivals" celebrated by appropriate sermons are Christmas, the Lord's Supper, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Ascension Day and the Christian Pentecost. The titles of the sermons devoted to these occasions are, "Good Tidings deserving of a Glad Welcome," "Thoughts on the Lord's Supper," "The Attraction of the Cross," "The Sepulchre in the Garden," "Thoughts on our Lord's Ascension," and "The Fruit of the

Spirit." The sermon on the Lord's Supper is beautiful, from its calm and humble and trustful reverence, as well as from its gentle candour towards those who do not join in celebrating this Christian rite. We are led to select one passage, from its autobiographic character :

"Nor is it, by any means, a small recommendation to me of attendance on this service, that I thereby am often made to feel as though still retaining a living bond with those who have sate with me at the Lord's table, but whose places, both there and elsewhere on earth, have ceased to have them for occupants. In the forty-two years which have this day been completed since I partook of my first communion in this house of prayer, many have been those who have here joined with me in shewing forth the Lord's death, and whom I shall see no more till I meet them in his living presence. In communion with him, I feel as belonging to a church of which they are still members. In renewing my remembrance of him, I awaken also recollections of those who have lived in the joyful light of the faith, and died in the strong comfort of the hope which they had learned, as I too would learn of him.

"For reasons of this kind, I have long loved the service which has for its especial object, a reverent and affectionate commemoration of the Lord Jesus. I like to have frequently presented to my sight and touch, the memorials of his body and his blood. I feel as though it is thus easier to imagine myself at the foot of his cross, and to ask myself what that cross should teach me. I think, too, that I have often been the stronger in faith, the wiser in purpose, the better in my whole frame of mind, for the meditations into which I have been led by attendance on this service. I am, therefore, myself disposed always to welcome its returning occasions, and would not willingly miss any of them."—Pp. 93, 94.

On the completion of the fortieth year of his ministry to the congregation at Cross Street, Mr. Robberds preached a deeply interesting sermon, reviewing the way in which the Lord had led him. In the course of it he beautifully says, "*God and man have both been very kind to me.*" This is a golden sentence. Thus earnestly and gratefully, in his review of his ministerial course, did Mr. Robberds acknowledge the mental freedom which he from the first found in an Unitarian pulpit :

"I cannot but reckon among my especial causes for gratitude in connection with my office as a Christian Minister, the liberty in which the ministers of the congregation assembling in this house of prayer have always been left, of pursuing their inquiries after religious truth, unfettered by any previous pledge to find it only in this or that particular creed, and of preaching whatever, in consequence of such inquiries, appeared to them the Gospel of Christ and the truth of God. Perhaps, indeed, that liberty may seem to have been greater when they who met here for religious worship and instruction, were content with the simple and comprehensive name of Protestant Dissenters, and before the zeal of some in later times, together with the Act of the Legislature for the protection of Dissenting Chapels, fastened upon this house of prayer and its occupants, the distinctive and narrower name of Unitarian. But,

practically, there has been no abridgement, and, in my own case, at least, I will take care that there never shall be any, of the liberty allowed to your ministers, of preaching that only which they conscientiously believe to be Christian and vital truth. When first invited to occupy this pulpit, I was not even asked by any one what was my particular belief. It was known that I had completed my course of study in a college intended for the education of Christian ministers. It was ascertained, most probably from my instructors there, or at least from some who knew me, that I appeared really desirous of devoting myself to the duties of such an office. An opportunity had been given to the congregation, before they invited me to become their minister, of forming a judgment on my pulpit services. But, as I said before, no question was asked me what I believed—no promise was required from me, no condition made, in reference to the doctrines which I should preach. The trust appeared entire, on the part of those who were to hear me, in my wish and purpose to be guided, in this respect, by my convictions of truth and my sense of duty. And the more deeply was the obligation felt, on my part, not to disappoint or abuse their trust. In the first sermon which I preached, after entering upon my office, I did, of my own accord, make a promise, I did give a pledge, and I solemnly called upon God to witness it, and so to help me as I should keep it. The promise was to this effect, that I would preach such doctrines only as, after careful inquiry and attentive study of the Scriptures, should appear to me true and important; and that from so preaching I would endeavour not to be turned aside, either by the desire of any man's favour, or by the fear of any man's reproach.

“That promise, I humbly trust, I have been enabled to keep; and a frequent cause of thankfulness it has been to me in my religious inquiries, as well as in my preparations for the pulpit, that I was not bound by any narrower promise, that I had not to consider whether, by coming to any particular conclusion, or by preaching in accordance with it, I should violate any condition imposed on me by others, or break any pledge voluntarily given by myself. I rejoiced in having my range of study and thought and speech unrestricted by any previously declared assent and consent to articles and confessions of faith; or by any tacitly understood necessity of finding neither more nor less in Christianity, than could be made to harmonize exactly with the interpretations and doctrines in favour with some particular denomination of its professors. I rejoiced in feeling that I might freely and fearlessly speak to my hearers on all which I should find my own judgment approving, and my own heart valuing, as moral and religious truth; and that they, as having also understanding, and responsible to the same God for its use, would exercise their own judgments and their own hearts, in duly considering whatever I should thus speak. I rejoiced in feeling that I was not to be either ‘a lord over their faith,’ to save them the trouble of thinking, or a slave and flatterer of their foregone conclusions, to echo back only their own thoughts—but a friend and brother and fellow-learner, to give them honestly and unreservedly the results of my own meditations and inquiries, in our joint pursuit of the things that appertain to truth and godliness.”—Pp. 323—325.

Mr. Robberds was too wise and too sincere a man to abuse the freedom conceded to him by his flock, either by the indulgence

of intellectual sloth, preventing him from ever attaining to definite convictions, or by a resort to the arts of mysticism to conceal from his hearers what his personal convictions were. He himself, in this interesting sermon, speaks of the state of having no belief at all, as "forlorn and miserable." How warm and glowing is his appreciation of the value of Unitarian Christianity! What a lesson and a rebuke do his words convey to those who on the one hand are so drugged with metaphysics and mysticism, or on the other with the pretentious creeds of orthodoxy, that they can see in the distinctive faith of the Unitarian church a body without a spirit, the husk without the precious grain!

"I am thankful, I repeat, that, in my own case, the path of continued and by no means fettered,—or that I am aware, timid inquiry, has led to no felt necessity of any material change in the creed of my earlier years; and that what change there may have been has rather been in the way of addition than of diminution. I am thankful that the tendency of my subsequent reading and thought and study has been, not only to confirm me in what, from the first, I learned to believe of the one God and of His Son Jesus Christ; but to open before me still wider and more attractive views of God's fatherly character and purposes, and to give me a deeper interest in Christ, as Himself the clearest revelation of all that God desires and loves in man, and has made him, when once a thoroughly filial spirit has entered into his heart, capable of becoming. And though all that I now believe would, perhaps, in the estimation of many, be accounted a scanty creed, yet I am thankful for the conviction, deepened on my mind by the inquiries and meditations of successive years, that the few great truths which it comprehends are really the elements of all that is valuable and vital in the religion and morality of Christians generally; that they form the substance of the wisdom which is to be gathered from the teachings and life of Christ; and that they are fitted to supply the most powerful and abiding inducements to make His word the nourishment of our souls, and His spirit our guide to the knowledge and love of God, and His example the measure and the model of our obedience and devotion to God."—Pp. 327, 328.

There is another passage which we have marked for extract from this sermon. It is that in which Mr. Robberds speaks of the "bounties and mercies" which were strewed along his path as a pastor. How serene the trust and cheerful the hope which dictated the expressions of gratitude for having been permitted to behold sorrows meekly borne and death fearlessly met!

"If I have known but few homes which have not had their seasons of anxiety, apprehension, and sorrow, I have also known but few which have not, apparently, enjoyed much longer seasons of quiet and comfort. It is by no means with a darkened aspect, that life presents itself, in my general recollections of those with whom my relation of minister has brought me into acquaintance. There have been among them many whom I remember now with far more pleasure than sadness,—many who made themselves valued and beloved while they lived, enjoyed heartily the portion of good which fell to them, performed cheerfully the work which they had to do, took patiently their occasional lot of

evil, and were not afraid, when God called them away, to trust themselves in His fatherly hands. Nor have they been always scenes of prosperity and seasons of health that have left a pleasing impression on the memory. I have come away from dwellings visited by affliction and adversity, cheered by the fortitude with which I have seen such visitations borne; and I have come away from chambers of sickness where thankfulness for God's past benefits has been a much more manifest feeling than any impatience, or disposition to complain of present sufferings. Nor has what I have seen of death itself tended, on the whole, any more than what I have seen of life, to leave an unpleasant impression on my remembrance. I have known it not seldom appear 'beautiful in its season;' and that not merely in the case of those who have gone down to the grave full of years and of honours, but also in the case of those who have fallen asleep at a much earlier period. I have repeatedly seen and felt the beauty of that last, serene repose, on the countenance of youth as well as age, of infancy as well as maturity, —that smiling repose from which every trace of suffering has vanished, and in which dreams of heavenly peace and blessedness have almost seemed to have begun."—Pp. 321—323.

From the other sermons on more general topics which this volume contains, we could, with equal pleasure to ourselves and profit to our readers, make copious extracts; but our space is contracted, and we must point attention to the remarkable discourse which stands third in order, and is entitled, "The Sepulchre in the Garden." It was preached by him on Easter Day in last year, and was the last public address he uttered. Before another Sabbath-day came round, the voice of the eloquent preacher was hushed in the silence of death. After a striking exordium, in which he dwells on the strange combination of "a garden and a grave," the preacher thus beautifully shews how appropriate a resting-place the garden of Joseph of Arimathea furnished to the Son of Man:

"The only reason alleged by the Evangelist, why the body of Jesus was deposited in the sepulchre of Joseph, is, that it was nigh at hand. And this, probably, was the principal, if not only motive which influenced the individuals concerned. But had they acted with the greatest possible deliberation, they could hardly have chosen, for the lifeless form of Jesus, a more suitable resting place than one surrounded by the quiet and cheerful scenery of a garden. Through all his life, he appears to have had a delight in being amidst the works of God. In them, doubtless, he had himself read those instructive lessons, and heard those encouraging voices, with respect to the kind and providential care of his Heavenly Father, to which he bade his disciples listen. The grass on which he walked or reclined, the flowers with which the fields around him were enamelled, the trees that refreshed him with their shade and their fruit, have, in a manner, inwrought themselves into his discourses. His words, if we may so speak, often breathe forth the freshness and the fragrance of the vineyard, the olive-mount, the corn-field, and the garden. Nay, a garden 'over the brook Cedron' is expressly mentioned, as a place to which 'Jesus often resorted with his disciples.' That same

garden was the scene of his bitter agony, his earnest prayers, and the strong consolation which he received in answer to them. How suitable it seems that, after his last pang of suffering was over, and the whole of his arduous work, including so much both of endurance and exertion, was finished,—his worn-out frame should be laid to rest where the calm majesty of the starry heavens would keep watch over him by night, and the ‘*silent hymns*’ of flowers and trees would be ascending around him to his God and Father, throughout the day.”—Pp. 51—53.

The last words of the preacher were to exhort his hearers to devotedness of the heart to God and union in spirit with Him. Surely he spoke of his own approaching burial when he said, “This will make the grave seem but as a quiet resting-place, amidst the sunshine of God’s presence and the tokens of his Fatherly love.”

CRITICAL NOTICES.

Astro-Theology; or the Religion of Astronomy: Four Lectures in reference to the Controversy on the “Plurality of Worlds,” as lately sustained between Sir David Brewster and an Essayist. By Edward Higginson, Author of the “Spirit of the Bible.” Pp. 96. London—Whitfield. 1855.

THIS is a most seasonable, instructive and interesting volume. We shall indeed rejoice in the notorious and somewhat bitter controversy which has immediately given rise to it, and of which it presents a most masterly epitome, if thereby public attention can be engaged on this truly simple yet effectual solution of the gratuitous difficulties which the orthodox combatants both agree in raising up, but which neither of them can do aught else than evade; the more so as the same evasion is to be met with in all notices of the controversy in the periodical magazines and reviews with which we are acquainted, as it is in almost all attempts by orthodox writers to reconcile Science and Revelation;—a circumstance which has occasioned us, no less than our author, to be “grieved rather than surprised” (p. viii). The volume before us is characterized, like all the other works of its author, by lucid order, clear and animated exposition, distinct and powerful argument, and an enlightened application of the results of careful theological study which should put to the blush those who habitually neglect it and ignorantly deny its importance to Christian faith and hope. We cannot give our readers a more accurate and interesting view of the nature of this little volume than by copying its brief Table of Contents:

- I. Jewish Astro-Theology; or, How devout Hebrews thought of the Sun, Moon and Stars.
- II. Scientific Astro-Theology; or, Modern Philosophical Views of the Solar System and Fixed Stars.
- III. Orthodoxy at issue with the Creation; or, the “Religious Difficulty” confessed by Sir David Brewster and his Opponent.
- IV. Scientific Analogies and the Christian Hope; or, Other Worlds and the Future Life.”

From this lucid arrangement of topics, the intelligent reader will at

once perceive how this very important controversy is brought distinctly to its just issue, and how the miserable fictions of orthodox theology are clearly detected and exposed. Good reason has our author to insist, as he does in his third Lecture, on the duty of those who entertain consistent and rational views on this subject to avow their faith. We extract the passage as affording also an excellent illustration of the writer's principles and style :

"Great need is there that those who so hold revealed truth as to present continually points of contact, and never of collision, with the truths of scientific investigation, should avow on the one hand their free and rational theology, and earnestly trace out on the other hand the great lessons of natural religion which science enables them more and more clearly to read. The separation of the two departments of Religion and Science is ruinous to both. Science, stopping short in the discovery of material substances, forces and laws, through fear of offending religious prejudices, becomes thereby the gross materialistic thing which it is often falsely charged with being in its own nature. And Religion, turning a deaf ear to the sublime discoveries of science, and keeping jealously aloof from contact with the intellectual activity of scientific thought, can never exert its highest inspiration upon the souls of those whose understandings are closed in its sacred name.

"And why is this separation? Why this jealousy between what is called Religion and what is called Science? Should they not be as parts of one and the same pursuit? the varied breathings of One Great Spirit? successive tributes of cumulative truth?—that truth having reference in both instances to the Creator's ways and will and attributes, and being properly religious when traced through the inductions of science, whether physical or mental or moral science,—and properly scientific, in the highest sense, when it has been caught from divine inspiration, in advance of man's natural knowledge of himself, his duties and his destiny. Are they not God's works that the man of science explores, as truly as it is God's word that the divine, too exclusively perhaps, expounds? Is the language any more obsolete to our minds, in which the former are written, than the dead Hebrew and Greek of the latter, which are translatable, nevertheless, into living English? Or is their text more perplexed? Or are their versions more various? Or their readings more uncertain? Does not the Divine Spirit shine forth in both to the intelligent and religious-hearted reader? Is it not treason to both, to set them for a moment at variance? Does not the analogy which is traceable between Natural religion and Revealed, enrich the one and endear the other from their mutual sources?

"So may the bright heavens ever shine upon the pages of the Gospel in the view of our free, comprehensive and blessed faith! So may the Gospel still shew our hearts a Heavenly Father's love in the mighty architecture of those countless worlds!"—Pp. 60—62.

From a volume every part of which is so admirably adapted to its place and purpose in the great argument of which it treats, we find it difficult to make selections; but this is the less to be regretted, as the volume itself is so small that the whole may be read attentively in an hour or two, and so attractive that no one who begins it will needlessly lay it down till he has read it through. We are glad to observe that it is published in a style worthy of its contents, and at a price which puts it within the reach of inquiring and thoughtful men of every class. It is inscribed "to the Members of the Westgate Congregation, Wakefield;" of his "most healthy and happy connection" with whom as their minister, the writer speaks in a beautiful dedication, in which he glances at their characteristic sentiments and culture as men and as

Christians. We rejoice in belonging to a sect of whose individual members such qualifications can be truly affirmed. We rejoice in our denominational union with a religious society who could gratefully welcome these harmonious instructions of Nature and of the Gospel, and with a teacher and preacher of the word of life who can so efficiently recommend it to the rational and reflective mind as the clearer and more exalted enunciation of the silent utterance of the heavenly host whose "sound goeth forth through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (p. 10). We are sure of receiving the cordial thanks of every one who may be induced by our very brief but earnest recommendation to read for himself this most instructive and delightful little volume.

POLITICAL SERMONS.

1. *Ambition Mortal, Peace Divine. A Sermon preached in the Westgate Chapel, Wakefield, on Sunday Morning, March 4, 1855, on the Tidings of the Death of the Czar Nicholas.* By Edward Higginson.
2. *Instruction to be derived from the Present Aspect of Political Affairs. A Discourse delivered in the High-Street Chapel, Newport, Isle of Wight, on Wednesday, March the 21st, 1855.* By John Crawford Woods, B.A.
3. *Peace the Gift, the Injunction of our Holy Redeemer; the Paramount Obligation of immediate Peace. A Sermon preached March 21, 1855, being the Day appointed for National Humiliation, at the Chapel, Canal Walk, Southampton.* By Edmund Kell, M.A., F.S.A.

THESE sermons shew the free thought and fearless utterance which characterize the Unitarian pulpit. Each minister forms his own judgment and utters it, without any constraint beyond that which a becoming respect for differing judgments inspires. The three sermons all relate to the Russian war, which is, however, viewed in very different lights. Mr. Higginson, on hearing of the death of the Czar, thought it better not to wait for the proclaimed Day of Humiliation, but seized, with that rapidity which, when combined with excellence, is the index of mental power, on the occasion for pouring forth his thoughts and patriotic hopes. Though simple in its aim, the sermon is equally judicious and powerful. It sketches with a few brief strokes the character of the Russian Emperor, so suddenly arrested in his mad career by the hand of death. The preacher, while warm in his patriotism, does not forget the moderation which becomes the pulpit, and the forbearance due to a fallen and deceased enemy.

Mr. Woods' Fast Sermon opens with a spirited rebuke to Lord Palmerston for contradicting, by the recent appointment of a Humiliation Day, the principles which he broached in his celebrated and admirable reply to the Edinburgh Presbytery, who sought, during the prevalence of the cholera, the appointment of a day of fasting and prayer. Pithily enough the preacher remarks, "The Government calls upon us to repent; let us demand of them to reform." The lessons which Mr. Woods deduces from the history of the war are, 1, the folly of postponing a troublesome duty, illustrated in our neglect of Russia during years of wrongdoing and unjust aggrandizement; 2, the evils of despotism in rulers and of superstition in their subjects; 3, the necessity of making merit the only claim to power in the State. He closes by an animated eulogium on the patriotism and sympathy of the people of England, and by an

emphatic declaration of his belief in the necessity and justice of the war in which we are engaged. The power indicated throughout the whole discourse gives good promise for the Unitarians of Adelaide, who have secured Mr. Woods' future services.

Mr. Kell, on the other hand, denounces the war as alike "impolitic, unjust and ruinous." He thinks that the "Allied Powers were the aggressors in this war;" and England he holds up as the miserable dupe of the ambition and (Latin) bigotry of the Emperor of France. Mr. Kell's authorities are Mr. John Bright and Mr. Geo. Thompson. While sympathizing with the ardent love of peace which has led Mr. Kell to adopt the conclusions named, we feel compelled in common honesty to disclaim all share in the opinions he propounds respecting the origin and the justice of the war.

A Selection of Sacred Music, consisting of Benedictus, Deus Misereatur, Six Hymns, Six Chants and Response, as sung at Little Portland-Street Chapel. Composed and Arranged for Four Voices, with Accompaniment for Organ or Pianoforte. By S. W. New, Organist of the above Chapel. London—Jewell and Letchford.

THIS Selection does credit to Mr. New's musical science and taste. The hymn tunes are well adapted to the beautiful words to which they are set, and ought to be favourites at the chapels at "Little Portland Street," "Essex Street," "Brixton," "Hampstead," "Hackney" and "Carter Lane," after which they are severally named.

Thoughts to Help and to Cheer. Second Series. 12mo. Pp. 229. Boston—Crosby, Nichols and Co. 1855.

THIS little volume is a manual of devotional sentiment and practical religion, and contains a text, a reflection, and a scrap of devotional poetry, for every day during the latter half of the year. There is little originality, but much sweetness and truth, in the thoughts. Here is a pleasant specimen :

"There are many who waste and lose affection by careless and often unconscious neglect. It is not a plant to grow untended; the breath of indifference or rude touch may destroy for ever its delicate texture. There is a daily attention to the slight courtesies of life which can alone preserve the freshness of affection. The easy surprises of pleasure, earnest cheerfulness of assent to slight wishes and habitual respect to opinions, the polite abstinence from personal topics in general company, unwavering attention to the comfort of those around us both at home and abroad, and the careful preservation of those proprieties of conversation and manner which are sacred when before the world, are some of the secrets of that true and rare happiness which age and habit alike fail to impair or diminish."—Pp. 88, 89.

Illustrations of the Law of Kindness. By the Rev. G. W. Montgomery. London—Washbourne. 1855.

A FAVOURABLE notice by Mr. Chambers in his *Edinburgh Journal* of this American work, long known to our readers, has procured for it an amount of popularity which has called forth another large edition, to which Mr. Washbourne has added a *Life of Mrs. Fry*, from the pen of her brother, Mr. Gurney, and an essay on *Almsgiving*, by Mr. John Washbourne.

INTELLIGENCE.

SOUTHERN UNITARIAN FUND SOCIETY.

The annual meeting of the above Society was held on Good Friday, April 6th, at the High-Street chapel, Portsmouth. The Rev. J. Fullagar introduced the service, and the Rev. E. Higginson delivered a highly valuable discourse, from Gal. i. 15—19, on St. Paul's retirement into Arabia. As the esteemed preacher has kindly consented to permit his sermon to be published, we will not mar the interest which it is so well calculated to excite, by any brief abstract which we might be able to give of its contents. May its sound monitions induce many a reader to follow the apostle's wise example! The crude notions of the half-tutored mind are not fitted to be the world's leaders.

After the morning service, the members and friends of the Society partook of a cold collation, and afterwards of tea, in the larger school-room of the chapel, which was gracefully adorned with evergreens. The Chairman, the Rev. H. Hawkes, after the sentiment of "The Queen and Royal Family," proposed, "Prosperity to the Southern Unitarian Fund Society," in connection with the name of the Rev. E. Kell.

Mr. Kell read the general report of the Society, which included reports from the various congregations connected with the Society, viz. Portsmouth (High Street and Thomas Street), Chichester, Newport, Southampton, Poole, Wareham, Lychett and Newbury. Some of these contained much interesting matter relative to the state of the churches in the district. The report concluded as follows:

"Your Committee, in surrendering their trust into your hands, hope that your Society has not laboured altogether in vain to keep alive the sacred lamp of Divine Truth in this district. They have cheerfully endeavoured to perform their part. And now, friends of that all-important truth which is pre-eminently eternal, we plead for your zealous, your hearty co-operation. These are no times for lukewarmness and indifference, but for ardent self-devotion and unflinching effort. What though there is abundant cause for weeping over individuals who tread the retrograde path,—aye, and over whole churches too,—there is all the more cause that those who would be faithful to their holy trust should watch and

strive and pray, and take their standard where only it can be truly taken, at the foot of their great Master's cross. Let nought content us short of that which *he* who died for truth and holiness asks and entreats from those who call themselves his followers. And if there be a day above all other days on which his words should thrill our souls, O surely it is *that* on which he died for man. And these our yearly meetings are—they should be—solemn eras. Scarce one can pass but some one from among us has ended his probation—his probation for eternity. Each from his still resting-place admonishes, each rational impulse warns us, to invert the practice of this world's poor fashion, and to make the things and the interests of time all, all secondary and subservient to the enduring interests of eternity. The rock of Truth on which the anchor of our faith is stayed is firm, is sure. O be the tribute of pure hearts we ought to lay upon the altar of our God as firm, as sure; and with glad hearts we shall, blessed by our Father's smile, press forward and take courage! Without our heart's devotion, we deserve to fail."

After the report had been received, and other routine resolutions passed, the Chairman called on the Rev. J. Fullagar to respond to the sentiment of "Civil and Religious Liberty all the World over." The following resolutions were then passed:

It was moved by the Rev. J. Fullagar, seconded by Mr. Pinnock—"That the best thanks of the meeting be presented to the Rev. E. Higginson for his truly valuable discourse."

It was moved by Mr. Blessly, seconded by Mr. Redwards—"That a petition for the abolition of Church Rates be presented from that Society" (a copy of which was then read).

It was moved by the Rev. E. Kell, seconded by the Rev. T. Foster—"That this meeting would express its deep sympathy with the three important Unitarian congregations of Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide; they trust that their career so auspiciously commenced, will develop the rich fruits of piety and Christian usefulness; and they heartily and affectionately offer their best wishes to the Rev. Maxwell Davidson, the Rev. George Heape Stanley and the Rev. John Crawford Woods, for their

happiness and their large and continued success in the work of the Lord."

The Rev. E. Kell moved, and the Rev. H. E. Howse seconded—"Cordial thanks to the High-Street congregation for their friendly and hospitable reception of the Society."

In the evening, the Rev. E. Kell conducted the devotional service, and the Rev. J. C. Woods delivered an impressive discourse, from Matt. v. 48, on Christian Perfection. Friends were present from a considerable distance.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT SUNDAY-SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

The tenth anniversary of this useful Society was held on Good Friday, April 6th, at Mossley. This arrangement was a departure from the hitherto observed custom of meeting every alternate year in Manchester, the most convenient centre of the Society's operations, and most accessible on a day when the ordinary week-day conveyances are suspended. At the last anniversary at Stockport, the earnest request of the Christian Brethren of Mossley to receive the members of the Society at their annual meeting in 1855, was complied with. Although the day was ungenial, and the means of reaching Mossley from distant parts of the two counties far from convenient, there was a good muster of friends. A special train from Manchester brought nearly two hundred persons. There were present representatives from the schools at Manchester and Miles Platting, Bury, Dukinfield, Mottram, Dean Row, Macclesfield, Stand, Monton, Hurst Brook, Oldham and Gee Cross. Amongst the visitors were Mr. Samuel Robinson, Mr. Edmund Potter, Dr. Marcus, Mr. Edward Shawcross, Mr. Rupert Potter, Mr. Eddowes Bowman, Mr. C. Grundy, Mr. Robert Shipman and Mr. Henry Rawson. The following ministers were present: Revds. Dr. Beard, R. B. Aspland, Charles Beard, John Wright, C. W. Robberds, James Taylor, T. E. Poynting and A. Lunn. The interior of the chapel of the Christian Brethren has been greatly improved in appearance since its opening. When occupied by the numerous congregation which was collected on this occasion, it looked both neat and commodious. The religious service was listened to with deep attention, well sustained from first to last by the preacher, the Rev. John Wright, who may be regarded as the founder of the Society, and on whom

hitherto its conduct has very mainly depended. The sermon was delivered *extempore*. The preacher took for his text Matt. xx. 34, "So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes; and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him." He observed that a peculiar characteristic attaching to all the miracles of Christ is their beneficent aim. Intrusted with power by God, he used it for no revengeful, antagonistic or destructive purpose, not even with any selfish, vain-glorious or ostentatious end in view, but always to cause happiness. In this we, possessing very different powers, may imitate him.—Referring to the text, there are blind fellow-creatures around us, whole classes of men deprived of spiritual eyesight, mental and moral light, and whole classes of children growing up in similar darkness. As Christ had compassion on the blind men, so we cannot but pity these morally and spiritually blind ones. The loss of the eye of the soul is a greater misfortune than the loss of that of the body. The state of persons thus destitute of religion is an unnatural state, as much as that of a man without eyesight. God meant us to be religious, and has implanted the capacity for religion, deeply and ineradicably, within us. To rescue the spiritually blind, we must do as Christ did to the blind men in the gospel, "touch them,"—that is, we must associate with them, gain their confidence, not stand aloof, not speak in a harsh and master-like tone to them, not patronize them, but must assume a friendly, sympathetic, brother-like position.—Referring especially to the work of a Sunday-school Teacher, it was insisted on that this is especially a *religious* work. Secular instruction may be given, but must be kept as secondary; to communicate religious knowledge, produce religious impression and call out religious feeling, must be the first great aim of the Sunday-school. This work must be carried on in a Christian spirit, with a constant reference to the life and influence of Christ. It must be undertaken as a solemn self-dedication, as a duty imposed on us by God, when he gives us knowledge and talents, in a spirit of pious trust in his aid, and the result will assuredly be joyful.

At the close of the religious service, about twelve o'clock, the business meeting was formed, the chair being occupied by the President of the Association, Mr. Samuel Robinson.

The President, on opening the meeting, said although they were not assembled for any mere local object, but for one which was of general interest, and in which a large number of congregations in the two counties were equally interested, he could not suppress the expression of heartfelt congratulation to the Mossley society on the tasteful manner in which they had completed their building. He was glad that they were able to receive the Society on that occasion with so much convenience and with such ample means of hospitality. He must congratulate them not merely on the material structure on which their eyes rested, but on the way in which they had worked out their own mental freedom, for the successful stand they had made in the assertion of their religious freedom. He would encourage them to follow out the work they had begun. One word of caution he would give them, and which he hoped they would not only excuse, but hereafter remember. They must not let their good be evil spoken of. They must take heed that their liberty did not degenerate into licentiousness. They were indeed a city set on a hill. There were many watching their conduct, willing and ready to proclaim any imprudence into which they might be betrayed. Let it be their aim always to unite the wisdom of the serpent with the simplicity of the dove. After some other remarks, he called on the Secretary to read the report.

Rev. John Wright said that in preparing this document he had thought it might be well to give a view of the history of each school during the last seven years. He had with this view prepared a statistical table, comparing the present condition of each school with that of 1848. The schools reported to be in connection with the Society were 40 in number, viz.

1. Ainsworth.
2. Altringham.
3. Bolton.
4. Bury.
5. Chowbent.
6. Congleton.
7. Croft.
8. Dean Row.
9. Dob Lane.
10. Dukinfield.
11. " Astley Street.
12. Flowery Field.
13. Gee Cross.
14. Hale.
15. Hindley.
16. Hurst Brook.

17. Knutsford.
18. Liverpool, Hope Street.
19. " Renshaw Street.
20. " Domestic Mission.
21. Macclesfield.
22. Manchester, Lower Mosley St.
23. " New Bridge St.
24. " Domestic Mission.
25. Monton.
26. Mossley.
27. Mottram.
28. Nantwich (discontinued).
29. Newchurch.
30. Oldham.
31. Padiham.
32. Park Lane.
33. Rawtenstall.
34. Rivington.
35. Rochdale, Clover Street.
36. " Blackwater Street.
37. Stand.
38. Stockport.
39. Styal.
40. Swinton.
41. Todmorden.
42. Walmesley (withdrawn).
43. Warrington.
44. Wheatly Lane (discontinued).

In the schools that have belonged to the Association since 1848, 15 schools have fewer scholars than in 1848, 7 have more, and 3 have the same. The total decrease is of 2 teachers and 385 scholars in seven years in 25 schools.

In 1848, there were 26 schools, containing 853 teachers and 5307 scholars. There are now 40 schools, containing 1218 teachers and 7202 scholars. Five schools have diminished during the past year in scholars and teachers, viz. Croft, Hope Street (Liverpool), Manchester (Domestic Mission), Park Lane and Swinton. On the other hand, 14 schools have increased in both scholars and teachers, viz. Ainsworth, Bury, Dukinfield, Astley Street (ditto), Hindley, Hurst Brook, Macclesfield, Mossley, Mottram, Newchurch, Padiham, Rawtenstall, Stand and Todmorden. The other 21 schools may on the whole be considered in about the same state as last year. The institutions connected with each of the schools were named. As a good specimen, we may give the Bury list: "Teachers' two-monthly meetings; teachers' two-monthly tea-parties; weekly teachers' meeting for religious improvement; school library, 800 volumes; chapel library, 900 volumes, used by teachers and elder scholars; plan for visiting the homes of all the scholars every month; clothing fund, 102 members; males' sick list, 134 members; females' sick list, 80

members; Saturday evening recreation class, 40 members; school choral class; cricket club."

The survey of the state of the schools was not calculated to produce any self-congratulation, shewing as it did, in the 25 schools originally connected with the Association, a diminution rather than an increase. But in the item of teachers, the number is sustained. The number of connected institutions is also greater than in any previous report, and there are scarcely any schools amongst us without at least some such useful auxiliaries. The general impression produced by a careful study of the statistical report, is a conviction that we are far behind what we ought to be in the number, size and efficiency of the schools. The only new publication issued during the year has been a List of Scripture Lessons for 1855, prepared by Rev. J. H. Hutton. Its sale has not equalled expectation. The increased price of paper has entailed a serious increase in the expense of the Magazine, and the Committee had to consider whether its issue should continue, causing as it did a monthly loss. The decision to continue it has been followed by some slight increase in its circulation. But to secure the permanence of the Magazine, the circulation must be yet further enlarged. The Teachers' Journal has from the first failed to secure for itself a remunerative circulation. There was a loss of £30 on it last year, and the sale of the present year is less than it was. Under these circumstances, the Committee have only had the painful alternative of discontinuing the publication. In doing so, they record their cordial thanks to Rev. Brooke Herford, who has ably fulfilled his part as editor of the work, although little supported by literary coadjutors. The sales of the Society's publications during the past year amount to 74,956, of which the larger portion has been of the two Magazines in numbers and volumes, amounting to 73,941.

Regular and systematic visiting of the schools is, in the opinion of the President and Committee, the most important function of the Association. The Committee have engaged the services of Messrs. Curtis and Freestone, each to visit one Sunday in every month; and Mr. John Broome to assist, and to give up his Sundays to the work. These arrangements have been in force only three months. Mr. Curtis has visited 7 schools; Mr. Freestone, 5

schools; Mr. Broome has visited 9 schools, making altogether 21 visits.

The Committee had witnessed with great pleasure a meeting of superintendents and conductors of Sunday-schools, held at Lower Mosley Street, Dec. 2, and are anxious to recommend and promote similar conferences. Notice was taken of a very friendly letter received from Rev. William Vidler, expressing the sympathy and good wishes of the Committee of the Sunday-School Association. The Committee, in alluding to the financial condition of the Society, hoped that the subscriptions promised last year would be all paid and continued, in order that the officers might carry on their work with vigour and success.

Mr. Matthew Curtis read the Treasurer's report, which shewed that the receipts of the Society had been during the year £50. 4s. 4d., and that there was a balance in hand of £9. 11s. 5½d.

The President, in offering some remarks growing out of the reports just read, expressed his regret that during so many years the attendance on the schools had not increased. One reason of this might indeed be suggested of a not unsatisfactory character; he meant that every year a large improvement was being made in primary schools for the education of the young. As the means of secular education were extended, Sunday-schools might with propriety still further develop their proper function, the communication of religious instruction. While our Sunday-schools, therefore, might in some localities be emptied of those that sought secular teaching only, their places would be more or less occupied by those who came for religious instruction. At the same time, when it was remembered how rapidly in their manufacturing districts population was increasing, and how much ignorance still overshadowed the mass of the people, it was not satisfactory to find that any diminution had taken place in any school. After making some remarks on the condition of their periodicals, and on their publications generally, the President dwelt on the importance of a strict system of visitation, of the efficacy of which he had a strong opinion. Give him an open school, allow it to be freely visited, let a fair and ingenuous report of its condition and working come periodically before the public, and he believed there was no school that would not under such circumstances improve. Visitation from school to school by

competent and judicious inspectors would largely help on school reforms. A plan is tried in one school—it does not succeed; it is tried in another, unacquainted with the previous failure. Active and intelligent inspection might have prevented this loss of time, effort and money. In another school, a new plan is tried and is found successful. It is well to have such an organization that these successes may be promptly communicated from school to school. In short, a system of visitation, well carried out, would stimulate the exertions of the teachers, would communicate new and efficient plans of teaching throughout the entire field of inspection. He admitted that the task of inspectors like theirs, clothed as they were with but limited authority, was of a very delicate nature. They entered a school with a very natural desire to see the good rather than the bad side. Teachers and conductors were not unnaturally somewhat alarmed at the prospect of an unfavourable report respecting their school. The relation in which the inspector stood with the teacher, required on the one hand forbearance, and moral courage on the other. Let the Sunday-school teachers receive the Society's visitors frankly and fearlessly, let them cloak nothing, and let them, when necessary, receive even censure candidly. It ought to be the aim of every conductor of a school and of every teacher in it, not merely to win the favourable report of a casual visitor, but so to direct and work the institution that it shall always deserve a good name, and shall secure the best educational results. The inspectors sent out by this Society month after month, have no power to back their opinions and judgment; they cannot, like a Government inspector, withhold or increase a salary. Their influence is simply moral, and to exert their power with the greatest effect, it was essential that they should be received by the teachers in a grateful spirit and with a conciliating manner.

Rev. J. R. Beard, D.D., in moving the adoption of the report, congratulated the friends at Mossley, as well as the conductors of the Society, on this large and successful meeting. There were causes for satisfaction and reasons for hope, notwithstanding the unfavourable circumstances alluded to in the report. They had some 1200 teachers in connection with them;—good, kind, upright and pious men and women engaged in a good work; then

they had more than 7000 scholars receiving religious and other instruction, and a distribution annually of more than 70,000 copies of their publications. He was satisfied that the Association then holding its anniversary was not amongst the least useful of those connected with the Unitarian body. There were, indeed, one or two discouraging features in the statement just read to them. He commended the honest spirit in which the report was drawn up. The simple truth was told; there was no attempt to make facts wear a brighter aspect than naturally belonged to them. Such a course of proceeding in the directors of a Society begat confidence. The Treasurer reported a balance in hand. There had been no want of energy on the part of the Committee. By an effort commenced last year at Stockport the funds had been increased. But the new plans were only partially in operation during the past twelve months. The assistant visitor had only just been engaged, and the salary (a very inadequate one) paid him was only for a portion of a year. This was the only reason of there being a balance in hand. There would be in the coming year need for all the pecuniary help promised. After various remarks on the publications of the Society, Dr. Beard alluded to the falling off in the number of teachers and scholars. True, it was but slight. Now he well knew that a school might lose in numbers and gain greatly in efficiency. There are other elements in educational success besides numbers. Systematic visiting of both scholars and parents he thought very desirable. In his own Sunday-school, all their plans for effecting this had hitherto broken down. Lately they had engaged the services of a good woman, who for a slight remuneration entered on a systematic visitation of the scholars at their homes. The ladies of the congregation, too, had organized themselves into a Visiting Society, and chosen the pupils of the Sunday-school as the basis of their operations. By their means it was hoped that they should establish a moral influence of the best kind between the congregation and the Sunday-school. He next spoke on the associated institutions, which he commended for their number and variety and the excellence of their objects, and concluded by a warm recommendation of prayer-meetings, which he thought ought to be carried on in connection with every Sunday-school in their body.

Dr. Marcus, in seconding the adoption of the report, said he had that day heard with equal pleasure and surprise of the flourishing schools of the Mossley Brethren. In a place the very name of which had only lately fallen on his ear, he found an institution with 106 teachers and 919 scholars. This was most cheering intelligence.

The reports were then unanimously adopted.

Rev. C. W. Robberds proposed the list of officers, from which we regret to observe the withdrawal of Mr. Wright as Secretary, to whom the Association is so largely indebted for its success and present position. The new Secretary appointed was Mr. Jeffrey Worthington. In the place of Mr. Robinson, Mr. R. D. Darbishire was appointed President.

Mr. Rawson moved, and Mr. Bowman seconded, a cordial vote of thanks to Mr. Wright for his excellent sermon. Both gentlemen alluded to the fact of Mr. Wright's retirement from office with strong regret at his feeling this step to be necessary, in consequence of the number and urgency of his other duties. Other votes of acknowledgment were passed, and a little after two o'clock the guests adjourned to dinner. This was plentifully, but at a very moderate price, provided in the large school-room below the chapel. After this social meal, the teachers from a distance dispersed for an hour's ramble about the village, some inspecting the large Independent chapel and school-room now in the course of erection, each capable of accommodating from 1000 to 1250 persons. Possibly the number of the school and congregation of the Christian Brethren may for a year or two be diminished; but with a continuance of their previous zeal and with Christian prudence in the conduct of their several institutions, we do not doubt that the rivalry of their Independent neighbours will do them good. Others climbed some of the hills which rise in all directions around Mossley, but the weather was not favourable to the landscape.

Soon after four o'clock, nearly all the friends were reassembled in the school-room, where about 600 partook of tea. The numbers of the party were very largely increased by fresh arrivals on their adjournment to the chapel. This building, which will seat about 1200 persons, was nearly filled, and a more interesting and intelligent assembly, composed in a very large degree of

young persons of both sexes, it has seldom been our fortune to see collected at an Unitarian meeting. The chair was taken and very ably filled by Mr. Ed. Shawcross, of Manchester. Our limited space precludes our giving a general report of the proceedings of the evening, but we must find room for an outline of the admirable address prepared for the occasion by Mr. Bowman, and for at least one of the addresses by which it was followed. The subject assigned to Mr. Bowman by the Committee was on the best mode of making the Sunday-school a means of training for the Christian church. He stated that, without having anything new to propose, he had consented to draw up for this meeting a few remarks which might serve as an introduction to the subject. He mentioned three modes by which he thought the proposed end would be furthered. 1st. By improving the class-teaching in all the classes. 2nd. By joining with the school such institutions as might tend to retain those who, having gone through the classes, would otherwise leave it altogether. 3rd. By the leading members of the churches, and especially the minister, giving their friendly sympathy and co-operation. With respect to the teaching, though religion should be taught as far as the scholars could comprehend it or the teachers convey it, and though everything should be taught in a religious spirit, he would not go so far as to exclude secular instruction altogether; and he argued from the circumstances of the origin of Sunday-schools, which were in the first instance designed to withdraw neglected children from open profanity and Sabbath-breaking, that their founder himself would not have objected to instruction of any useful kind, provided only it were given in a truly religious and Christian spirit.

The chief difficulties of the Sunday-school teacher were in the directly religious teaching. It was easy to lay down a high standard and say that we must get men who are at once pious and zealous and well educated, but very difficult to find men who actually came up to the standard. But as the efficiency of Sunday-schools depends upon the individual teachers more than upon the superintendent or the particular system adopted, and as we cannot look either for a very different or a much increased class of instructors, we must see how far the difficulties of our actual teachers can be met or removed.

The two great requisites for teaching religion are, first, that a man should have a knowledge of the subject, especially a knowledge of the Scriptures, together with power of communicating; and, secondly, that he should have a truly religious spirit. As to the first, many helps had now been provided by ministers and other friends, and among others were mentioned Dr. Beard's Dictionary of the Bible, the publications of the Sunday-school Association, and Mr. Wicksteed's Commentary on Matthew. These gave to the teachers of the present day a great advantage over those of the last generation. As to the second, it was of course true that no mere study or external aids could give religious feeling, and there was danger even in insisting too strongly upon it, as this might lead to insincerity. A proper spirit would, however, be favoured in the teacher by his frequently reflecting on the importance and responsibility of his office. He should also constantly remember how deep an impression is made on young minds by what is done or said by him in their presence: even his manner and tone of voice should be controlled, lest some prejudicial effect should be inadvertently produced on those who look up to him as an authority, and are always quick to observe and imitate, especially what is wrong. Every teacher, moreover, should try to acquire an interest in his work: if got through merely as a task, it will not be done well. The little difficulties that occur in managing a class, which are sometimes annoying enough, give occasion to a teacher to exercise his inventive faculty in devising means to overcome them, and applying his knowledge of human motives and dispositions, which will furnish him with many sources of interest. His empire over his scholars should not be regarded as one of mere superiority in age or authority or discipline, but as the empire of mind over mind. It is most important too that he should cultivate a sense of duty; he will often find that what he began as a duty he will continue as a pleasure; and in any case the satisfaction of having obeyed the call of duty will outweigh the irksomeness, if any, of the task, and impart a purer pleasure in proportion as it has cost a greater effort.

The second means to be mentioned was the union with the school of secondary institutions that might attract and retain those who would otherwise feel no further interest in it. Some

schools had established evening classes professedly for recreation; and though some parties of great authority and long experience in the conduct of Sunday-schools were opposed to such classes, Mr. B. thought that, when associated with Mutual Improvement Societies and controlled by direct connection with the school, great benefit might result from them. Besides these, there were, however, other institutions quite unobjectionable, and which had powerful influence in inducing those good habits and feelings which lead young people to become members of a church. There were School and Teachers' Libraries for mental and moral improvement by private reading, and Mutual Improvement Societies, in which progress was aided by the healthy stimulus of companionship and emulation. Benevolent and Provident Societies, Savings' Banks and Temperance Societies, were highly favourable to the formation of excellent moral habits, which, without being themselves religion, were friendly to it and akin to it.

The last means spoken of was the co-operation and friendly interest of those already long connected with the Christian church, the adult and leading members of our congregations. In our appeals for aid in teaching, we usually addressed only the younger members of our churches; but it would be a great addition to the efficiency of our schools if some of maturer age and riper experience in the trials and duties of life would act as teachers, especially of the older classes. Great good also might be done by visiting the homes of the scholars, and by the appointment of a home visitor for this purpose. But no one can effect so much towards making the Sunday-school a preparation for the church, as the minister of the church himself, aided by his family. He is the head and pastor of the whole flock, actual and future; and to him all look up. Teachers and scholars alike respect his authority, seek his counsel, and are animated by his encouragement and approbation. If he is indifferent to the school, so will be its teachers and scholars, and the work will languish; if he is interested and zealous, he will give heartiness and vigour to both teachers and taught. Scholars will then on leaving school spontaneously join the church in which he ministers, for they will have already learnt to regard him as their friend, and to look forward with anticipated pleasure to the time when as members

of his flock they will enjoy a nearer and higher intercourse with him.

Rev. Charles Beard, after some preliminary observations, remarked that the prevailing impression produced upon his mind by Professor Bowman's excellent paper, was a melancholy one. The objects towards which all managers of Sunday-schools ought to direct their efforts were there indicated, and many practical suggestions for their attainment thrown out. Yet in the majority of cases it was impossible not to be aware that Sunday-schools did not act as nurseries for the congregations to which they were attached; generation after generation were trained in them, only to go out into the world and apparently forget where they had received their instruction. If ministers were in some cases able to congratulate themselves upon the prosperity of their congregations, the Sunday-school had not usually been the source of that prosperity. At the same time, he did not know how, with the means and opportunities at command, more could be done in the Sunday-schools than was done. The intellectual attainments of teachers were generally not so conspicuous as the willingness with which the task was undertaken. Education was described as the influence of mind upon mind, and much was said of the efficacy of personal character and influence in imparting religious instruction; but how was this complicated and delicate process to go on, when the children were taught only an hour or two in the week, by one teacher one Sunday, by another the next, sometimes by inefficient teachers, sometimes by none at all? Still there were considerations which prevented his own mind from being prevailingly despondent as to the methods and results of Sunday-school instruction. In the first place, Sunday-school teachers had undertaken, from the necessities of the case, a work which overtasked their powers, and which they could never perform completely. They had the whole burthen of the nation's ignorance upon their shoulders.

While their peculiar work was the imparting of religious knowledge, a great proportion of the population looked to them for secular instruction also. And not only did any adequate religious education presuppose a basis of secular knowledge, but also, when ignorant children came to them holding up beseeching hands for aid, demanding such instruction as would tend to inform their minds and improve their social position, it was impossible to withstand the appeal. The Sunday-school teacher must therefore look, as his efficient assistant in the too onerous work he had undertaken, to a complete system of national education. Only when six days of the week had been spent in acquiring the rudiments of knowledge, in which the Sunday was now frequently occupied, could it be hoped that the religious instruction of the Sunday-school would be adequate and successful. And so strong was his feeling on this point, that he would accept almost any system of national education rather than have none; for he believed that before the influence of extended education, no false or immoral systems of theology could long retain their ground. In conclusion, he exhorted them to pursue their way steadfastly, in good hope of valuable results, even though at times it might be hard to estimate the work actually done. The bread cast upon the waters would be found after many days; it was impossible that so much earnest effort, so much righteous self-sacrifice, should pass away fruitless.

The other speakers were Mr. Darn-ton, of Dukinfield; Mr. Curtis, of Manchester; Mr. Hall, of Bury; Mr. James Robinson, of Mossley; Mr. Freestone, of Manchester. About eight o'clock a doxology was sung, with that spirit which Lancashire people habitually infuse into their psalmody, and the meeting broke up, well pleased with the success of their annual gathering, and the harmonious and truly Christian spirit which had characterized the day.

OBITUARY.

Jan. 4, at her residence, Sumner Hill, Dublin, at the advanced age of 103, Mrs. ABIGAIL HONE.

It has seldom been our lot to record the decease of a more venerable individual than of this time-honoured and

faithful disciple of Jesus Christ. "She was an old disciple indeed," and nearly to her last moments cherished a deep interest in the welfare of the religious society with which she had been connected for nearly a century. Having

descended from parents firmly attached to the principles of Nonconformity, she inherited their love of religious freedom, and openly professed whatever she believed to be true. A gratifying instance of this occurred in her 90th year, when she gave the most important evidence in the Court of Chancery of the Antitrinitarian opinions which had been inculcated for eighty years by the honoured and faithful ministers of Eustace Street, whose religious services she had enjoyed for so long a period. Possessing a kind heart, she was ever mindful of the poor; and through her benevolence, adversity was frequently beguiled of its anguish and poverty of its woe. Whilst her health and strength permitted, she was seldom absent from the house of prayer; and when no longer privileged to enjoy public worship, she derived great comfort from the private devotional services of her beloved pastor, who still survives her. She spent her privacy in communion with Him whose favour had been her morning light, and whose praises now became her evening song. She waited for her great change with Christian resignation, and bore the pains which she experienced towards the close of her life with exemplary patience, thus affording the most satisfactory evidence that her Unitarian faith was an anchor to her soul, sure and steadfast in life and in death.

T. F. T.

Feb. 2, at Warwick, Mr. SAMUEL BROWN, in the 55th year of his age, after enduring a lingering illness with Christian resignation. He was an old member of the High-Street chapel. Being of a kind disposition, and possessing deep but unostentatious piety, he was highly esteemed by the society assembling in that place of worship. For thirty-five years Mr. Brown held the office of Actuary to the Warwick Savings' Bank; and on his retirement in June last from that post, owing to increasing debility, a handsome testimonial was presented to him by the Directors, to mark their approbation of the upright and faithful manner in which he had discharged the duties of his office.

Feb. 4, at his residence, Cliff's-End House, Exmouth, CHARLES GIFFORD, Esq., in the 80th year of his age. He was an older brother of the late Lord Gifford, and had rendered him material assistance during his preparatory studies for that profession of which he

became so brilliant an ornament, and in which he raised himself, by his perseverance and industry and talent, to so eminent a position, he having died when Master of the Rolls. Mr. Gifford in 1816 married a daughter of the late Col. Moresby, by whom he had issue five children; three only survived to lament the loss of their affectionate parent. Having early imbibed the principles of Unitarianism, his lengthened course through the Christian path confirmed those sentiments which he had adopted and cherished; and when he found his earthly career drawing to a close, they afforded him that joy, peace and consolation which passeth all understanding. About two years ago he was afflicted with blindness, which he bore with resignation and even cheerfulness. The immediate cause of his death was paralysis. Notwithstanding bodily ailments, he never ceased, till within a few Sundays before his death, in his attendance at Gulliford chapel. Of the congregation there he had been a member for many years. His kindness of disposition and upright principles had endeared him not only to his relatives, but to a wide circle of friends. His loss to the Unitarian society at Gulliford is irreparable. On Friday, Feb. 10th, his remains were interred in the Gulliford burial-ground, near the Barings' family fault. On the Sunday morning following, the Rev. Lewis D. Jones preached a very impressive discourse, to a crowded congregation, on the blessings and consolations derived from the Unitarian religion at the hour of death.

C. C.

Feb. 5, aged 85, ABRAHAM STODDON, Esq., Exmouth. For many years he took an active part in the Unitarian cause, but owing to bodily sufferings, he had not of late years been able to attend the chapel at Gulliford. He was a lineal descendant of Hubert Stoddon, the poet and the worthy Unitarian confessor.

The Rev. WILLIAM STEVENS, who was pastor of the Earl-Street congregation, Maidstone, for twenty-seven years, died on Friday, Feb. 16, in the fifty-ninth year of his age. Mr. Stevens was a native of Brighton, and received his education in a private school in that town. He had also some further instruction after leaving school, when he turned his attention to the ministry. His studies in preparation for this work were pursued under the superintend-

ence of the Rev. Robert Aspland at Hackney for a period of four years. His attainments as a scholar, and the clearness, purity and elegance of his style, bear testimony to the faithfulness with which he improved the advantages which he enjoyed whilst under Mr. Aspland. His fellow-students were Messrs. Meek, Smethurst, Thomas and F. Horsfield, and others, of whom some were lay students. On the completion of his studies, he was settled for some years with the congregation at Newport, in the Isle of Wight. When he left the island, he was a short time at Liverpool, whence he removed to Todmorden, where he received a pressing invitation to become minister to the congregation in that place. On his way from Todmorden to Brighton, he preached for three months at Maidstone, during the absence of the Rev. George Kenrick. He then proceeded to Brighton, where he opened a school, and conducted the evening service at the New-Road chapel, until Mr. Wallace settled there as minister.

Mr. Stevens married in 1824, and remained at Brighton till he removed to Maidstone in 1828, when he succeeded the Rev. B. Mardon.

The following extract from the funeral discourse (from 1 Cor. xv. 57, 58) preached by his friend and neighbour, the Rev. Edward Talbot, contains a brief but well-deserved testimony to the true but retiring worth of Mr. Stevens, both as a man and minister:

"For twenty-seven years your late amiable and respected pastor has laboured amongst you. By a pure and consistent life, he has, according to the measure of human infirmity, shewn forth the blessed influences of the faith which he preached. Greatly to be envied in some respects are those in the profession of the Christian ministry who possess a robust bodily constitution, and in consequence much of that nervous force which may enable them, with the power of energetic utterance, to compel the attention of their hearers, to break for a while the habitual current of their thoughts, and rivet their attention to those things which make for their abiding peace. This faculty, so greatly dependent on physical constitution, your late pastor did not possess. But even here a too humble estimate of his own power, a shrinking from doing what he feared he should not do well, often kept him silent; I here allude to those social gatherings when we are wont to dispense with

written notes. But when from time to time, urged by his own feelings or local circumstances, he came forward as the advocate of the important truths which we hold as Unitarian Christians, or of other views* which he deemed important, he joined to the habitual clearness and elegance of his pulpit discourses, a force and eloquence which made it the more to be regretted that the weakness of the body prevented the more frequent imparting of his well-stored mind and the kindly feelings of his benevolent and catholic heart.

"His voice will now no more be heard among you. But, my friends, even in a preacher there is something better than mere eloquence, and that is settled and correct views of scriptural doctrine, combined with a holy life.

"The opinions that your pastor held, he held clearly and distinctly. You were in no doubt as to what his views were on all important points. He set before you the great truths of the fatherly goodness and unpurchased mercy of God. He preached to you a life to come, and the doctrine of a just yet merciful retribution. By a blameless life he illustrated the holy doctrines which he preached, and in a dying hour shewed their power to sustain and give peace when heart and strength faileth. He has therefore so preached as to place on you the obligation of cherishing the Christian's faith, and of exhibiting in your daily conversation the virtues of the Christian's life,—that thus you also in your parting hour may possess the calm peacefulness of those that fall asleep in Jesus."

Mr. Stevens has left a widow, and a niece to whom he has been as a father.

Feb. 17, at Ormskirk, Miss SARAH FOGG, aged 62, daughter of the late Rev. Peter Walkden Fogg, of that place. She had been a teacher for more than forty years, and was universally esteemed for her kindness and attention. During the earlier part of her life, she assisted her father in the preparation of a Grammar, in two volumes, entitled, "*Elementa Anglicana*," which was commended by John Horne Tooke and other celebrated grammarians. She was also useful in the preparation of a Grammar of Orthography, which

* See Thoughts on Future Retribution: a Sermon delivered at Ditchling, Sussex, May 24th, 1846. By William Stevens. His occasional controversial lectures also gave much satisfaction.

reached several editions. When young, during her residence in Stockport, she was a member of the old Unitarian chapel there, and was well known to many in that town. Her kindness to an aged and afflicted aunt was admired by numbers of her acquaintances.

She was interred in the small burial-ground attached to the chapel in Ormskirk, and may probably, owing to recent laws, be the last that will have a grave there. In seventy years since the chapel was erected, there have only been twenty-six funerals, and fourteen of them have been members of the family of the late Rev. P. W. Fogg.

Feb. 18, aged 68, Mr. HENRY TAYLOR, of Lymstone. He was so conscientious and upright in matters of business, that the most prejudiced against Unitarianism preferred transacting business with him to those of their own religious party who were in the same trade. His memory will be cherished by his fellow-townsmen as a just and upright tradesman and a sincere Christian.

C. C.

March 11, aged 65, at Southampton, after a short illness, MARY GARDIN, the beloved wife of Captain FURST, 63rd Rifles.

March 21, at Warminster, in his 81st year, HENRY WANSEY, Esq. Fully convinced of the value and efficacy of the Unitarian views of Christianity, his distinguishing characteristic was a firm trust in God, which supported him through a long and weary decline, and comforted him in the contemplation and near approach of death. He was strongly attached to the principles of

civil and religious liberty, and throughout his long life steadily advocated and maintained them.

The cause of Presbyterian Dissent in Warminster, which from death, removal and the decay of the manufacturing interest, had so long declined, he (with other branches of his family) was zealous and constant in maintaining, both by personal aid and in seeking assistance wherever it was to be obtained, thus securing the privilege of religious service in the Old meeting, where his forefathers for nearly two centuries had worshipped.

He withdrew early from public life (being of domestic habits and fond of country pursuits); with the exception of filling for many years, and until its dissolution, the post of Chairman of the County Fire Office, for his services in which he received a handsome testimonial; yet he always felt a deep interest in passing events of national and local concern, especially if they bore upon the principles he professed; and being of a cultivated and reflecting mind, he thought much, occasionally resorting to writing and the press; and from his known judgment, experience and integrity, he was much respected and consulted with on most public matters within his sphere.

Mr. Wansey was one of the few remaining students of Hackney College, and his classic and refined taste was a source of pleasure to him to the last.

He was followed to the grave by numerous members of his family, and his remains rest in the Free Burial-ground, for which he had chosen the motto, "Mors Janua Vitæ."

W. W.

MARRIAGES.

Jan. 21, at Park-Lane chapel, near Wigan, by Rev. F. Knowles, Mr. HENRY BRINDLE to Miss ANN ADAMSON, both of Park Lane.

Jan. 23, at the High-Street chapel, Warwick, by Rev. Daniel D. Jeremy, Mr. J. BUFFERY to Miss MARY ANNE CHECKETTS.

Jan. 27, at the Old chapel, Dukinfield, by Rev. Chas. Beard, Mr. JAMES WALSH to Miss ALICE KENWORTHY, both of Dukinfield.

Feb. 15, at the Westgate chapel, Lewes, by Rev. H. W. Crosskey, Mr. JAMES ADAMES, of Chichester, to MARIA

ELIZABETH, only daughter of W. CROSSKEY, Esq., of Lewes.

April 6, at the Unitarian chapel, Hindley, by Rev. J. S. Ragland, Mr. THOMAS RAGLAND to ELIZABETH RAMSDALE, of Wigan, second daughter of Mr. George FLETCHER, of Radcliffe Bridge.

April 25, at the New Gravel-Pit chapel, Hackney, by Rev. John Colston, uncle of the bride, JOSEPH, eldest son of Joseph HAMES, Esq., of Rotherby Hall, Leicestershire, to ELIZABETH, eldest daughter of John CUMBERLAND, Esq., of Tufnell Park, Holloway.